EASY GOOD DEEDS

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

INTRODUCTION

By

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الحمد لله وكفى وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى

Allah has created this world so that creatures living here may, through good actions, provide for the Hereafter and do deeds that may earn for them Divine pleasure.

However, we become so engrosed in the affairs of worldly life that we become oblivious of the true purpose of this life. So every living moment from morn till eve is spent in making earthly life better and more and more pleasant. In this struggle there are few of Allah's bondsmen who think of bettering their lot in the Hereafter, although it is an established fact, which even tie most hardened atheist cannot deny, that everyone has to leave this world one day and none knows exactly when the summons would come.

The methods prescribed by Islam to better the human lot in the Hereafter are not really difficult; in fact, if one adopts them, his earthly life too becomes pleasant and comfortable. But unfortunately, it is generally believed today that observance of Islamic teachings, is difficult and demands the sacrifice of many worldly advantages, pleasures and comforts.

Consequently, most people, being scared of this assumed difficulty, veer away from the Divine path.

The fact is that, firstly, Islamic commandments and injunctions are not per se difficult to follow and whosoever of Allah's bondsmen desires to follow them is aided by Allah and his lives in this world as well as in the Hereafter, are changed for the better and to his greater advantage.

Secondly, even if there is some difficulty or some laborious effort is called for in the observance of rouse command, it is insignificant if one keeps in mind the eternal bliss and comfort vouchsafed in the Hereafter for the observers. Even in this worldly, earning the daily bread does involve some hardship but it is accepted since it is rewarded. Similarly if we keep in mind that observance of Islamic commandments is going to earn for us unimaginable rewards in the Hereafter, we would hardly shirk the slight hardship involved.

Thirdly, while there are some Islamic commandments and injunctions the observance of which does entail some labour, there are other Divinely ordained acts which do not entail any hardship nor are they time consuming nor do they demand any expenditure. It is only a matter of attitude; if one develops the right attitude, he would go on chalking up good deeds in his roster of deeds, and if one goes on observing them, he would have a vast store of good deeds that would fetch rewards in the Afterlife.

In this world, we do not realize the true

importance of storing up good deeds, but when our eyes shall close in eternal sleep and when we shall be summoned before Allah to answer for whatever we did in this world, then we would know how important even the most ordinary good deed shall become. Good deeds are the currency of the Afterlife; gold and silver and worldly coins shall avail nought, the only question to be asked would be "How many good deed have you brought to be reckoned ?" If then the pocket would be empty, one would rue and repent why the roster of deeds was not filled up with good acts. But then all repentance would be of no avail as the time for acts would be long past.

The exalted companions of our eternally blessed Holy Prophet knew the worth of good deeds; they were eager to do good. As soon as they learnt that some good deed earned Divine pleasure they did it and went on doing it. And if they learnt it late, they regretted the delay.

Abu Huraira recounted the Hadith to Abdullah ibn Omar that whosoever offers the *salah* of *Janazah* at the burial service of another would earn merit equivalent to one carat and whosoever goes with the bier and remains with it till burial earns two carats each carat being equal to the hill of *Uhad*.

Ibn Omar asked Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) to verify it, which she did, Ibne Omar exclaimed "Alas we have lost so many carats". (Tirmidhi).

Every good deed which earns Divine pleasure

is most valuable . As it is only in this world that one can do good deeds, especially those that entail no hardships and earn merits for them, it would be a misfortune of the highest order if one shuns them here only to repent in the Hereafter.

The present booklet is a compendium of good deeds done easily, without any significant labour and without any 'expenditure. Whosoever shall pay heed to them shall go on doing good deeds and earn merits.

The Muslims are requested to read this booklet carefully and to do the good deeds mentioned herein as a routine. May be that these apparently insignificant deeds steer our lives on to the path of Divine pleasure and ensure our salvation.

May Allah give the author and all Muslims the opportunity to observe these injunctions and may He grant us merits and its bounties in the Hereafter. Ameen.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS

Only those deeds have been discussed here that do not involve any significant labour or difficulty but earn much merit and reward. The purpose is to awaken in the hearts of the readers the urge to follow and observe them and increase their store of goodness for the Afterlife. However, it is necessary to remember the following points when reading this book:

1. Since this booklet deals with only those good deeds that are easy to perform without much labour or hardship and one can start performing them immediately, there is no mention of those acts and actions which are unavoidably enjoined and prescribed. Hence it should be remembered that din (i.e. faith) is not confined to the deeds mentioned here. The commandments of faith embrace all aspects of life and it is incumbent upon every Muslim to carry out all prescribed acts and to desist from sinning.

This book has two purposes: Firstly it is to urge those who already carry out the prescribed duties to add those easy-to-perform actions in their repertoire of good deeds and thus enhance the positive value of their roster of deeds. The second purpose is to attract those who, believing the commands of the faith too difficult to observe, have

deviated from it, and to gradually persuade them to do easy-to-perform deeds which lead them at once to the portals of faith. It is hoped that if they start performing those easy deeds, there shall gradually awaken in their hearts the urge to observe all the commandments of the faith and they shall one day easily embrace a wholly religious way of life.

2. The second point to be understood is that *ahadith* (saying of our eternally blessed Prophet) have been quoted in this book which promise Divine forgiveness for some very simple actions. However, it must be remembered, when reading these *ahadith* that the sins which are automatically pardoned by good deeds are minor sins only: major sins require formal penitence and forswearing. The Holy Qur'an says:

إِن تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ

If you avoid the major sins you are prohibited to perform, We shall atone your minor vices.

Similarly, sins relating to the human rights are not pardoned until and unless the right due to the aggrieved is restored to him or her, or the aggrieved person forgives the wrongdoer.

Thus the mention of sins pardoned by simple good deeds should not delude the reader into believing that whatever sins big or small he commits he would be receiving Divine pardon by virtue of these good deeds. One should keep in mind the environment in which the eternally blessed Prophet Muhammad spoke of Divine pardon for good deeds:

The conditions then were such that it was difficult to imagine a mu'min (a believer) committing a major sin and not repenting for it. In those days most sins were minor and thus only those sins were mentioned, while the Seriousness and heinousness of major sins and the importance of penitence and penance remain.

3. Keeping in mind the above mentioned two points, one must not forget the following saying of our eternally blessed Prophet:

لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ مِنَ الْمَعْرُوْفِ شَيْئًا

Never take any -good deed as humble.

Hence one must never be deluded into believing that if we are unable to do big deeds, how can small relatively insignificant deeds lead to our salvation? A good deed is never insignificant and so no opportunity of doing good should be let pass, as it is entirely possible that good deed may be rewarded by Divine 'pleasure and our whole life may change.

This book, if read with those points in mind, shall be useful. May Allah reward this humble effort and may He grant us the good fortune to do good deeds. *Ameen.*

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(1) GOOD INTENTION

Intention is an alchemic prescription that can turn base dirt into noble gold. The hadith says "All actions depends upon intentions."

It is sometimes interpreted to mean that good intentions justify bad deeds too and turn sins meritorious. This is entirely wrong. Sin is always a sin no matter how noble the intention may be. For instance if someone breaks into a house to steal with the intention of giving away as alms whatever he would steal would be a thief deserving the prescribed punishment. His good intentions would not earn hire any merit nor would his sin be pardoned.

What this *hadith* means is as follows:

1. A good deed earns merit only if done with right intention. For instance prayer would earn merit only when one prays only for Divine pleasure: if one prays to impress others, then, instead of earning merit, it would earn punishment.

2. The second interpretation which is germane to the present discussion is that all lawful deeds actually earn neither merit nor punishment, but if these are done with good intent, they become acts of worship and earn merit. For instance eating is lawful: but if one eats with the intention that food shall give hire energy and that energy lie shall spend in the service of Allah, the act of eating would

earn merit. Similarly if one eats with the intent that his physical beady too has its rights and dues which include nourishment through eating or if one eats with the intent of getting pleasure and taste and of thanking Allah for these, the eating become an act of merit.

There is no lawful deed of life, which if done with good intent, does not become act of merit.

A few instances shall elucidate the point further:

(a) Honest earning, whether by trade or service or industry or agriculture, if done with the intent of rightly fulfilling the duties enjoined by Allah toward oneself and one's family, would become an act of merit.

Then if one further intends to spend whatever he may save after fulfilling the needs of himself and his family in helping the poor and in other similar good deeds, he would earn further merit.

(b) When a person engaged in learning intends to serve the humanity through his knowledge he would go on earning merit as long as he remains engaged in acquisition of knowledge. For instance a student of religion may decide to propagate the faith, a medical student to alleviate human suffering due to disease, an engineering student to serve his people through his specialized knowledge etc. all these acts would become acts of merit because of the intention which motivates the doer.

(c) A man, knowing that sustenance and

subsistence is the responsibility of Allah which He shall fulfil without fail, engages in a particular profession or vocation with a view to serve humanity, his profession would earn him merit.

For instance if someone enters the medical profession consciously choosing it from among other professions in order to cure the sick, he would earn merit even if he charges for his services. Such a man would not hesitate to provide free treatment for the poor and the destitute.

A cloth merchant who enters this profession to provide clothes to people because clothing oneself is a religious duty, would also earn merit.

Similarly a government servant, motivated by a desire to serve the common man and fulfil his needs, would earn merit. "Thus, every profession, becomes meritorious, provided the intention is right."

(c) If one dresses in finery not to show off his status or wealth, but to afford pleasure to others, it is an act of merit.

(d) If one treats his children with love because it is a *sunnah* of our eternally blessed Prophet, it earns him merit.

(e) If one does the household chores because this too is a *sunnah* as our eternally blessed Prophet helped in the housework, its merit rewards in the Afterlife.

(f) Loving conversation with wife and children is a *sunnah* and the eternally blessed Prophet has

so ordained, hence such an act is also meritorious if done to follow the *sunnah*.

(g) Hospitality to guests, if shown in pursuance of *sunnah* is an act of merit.

(h) Planting a sapling or plant in the house so that it may one day be of use of some man or animal and please the onlooker would be a good deed.

(i) Writing a beautiful and legible hand to make it easy for the reader to read is an act of merit.

(j) If a woman dresses herself in beautiful raiment and wears ornaments and adorns herself to please her husband and if a man remains clean and neat to please his wife, both are good deeds.

(k) If permissible recreation is indulged in to the extent needed to prepare oneself for duties it is a meritorious act.

(l) If a watch is kept to know prayer timings and to realize the value of time which is intended to be spent in good deeds, it is an act that earns merit.

There are a few common examples from everyday life which can earn much merit for the doer, Imam Ghazali has rightly observed in his Ihya'–al–'ulum that there is no lawful action in human life which, if done with the right intent, cannot be changed into an act of merit. Even if husband and wife give mutual pleasure to each other, each with the intent of giving the other his or her due and making them pure this too would give them merit.

2. PRAYING

Allah likes his bondsmen to pray to Him. If a man, however munificent he may be, is again and again asked for anything, he sooner or later loses his patience and becomes angry. But Allah, on the contrary, is, pleased the more his bondsmen ask him. *Hadith* tells as that Allah is displeased with one who does not ask him for anything in prayer.

Praying is not only a means of realizing one's purposes but is, in itself, an act or worship. In other words praying even for one's personal ends and worldly needs is counted among acts of worship and earns merit. The more one prays the closer one gets to Allah. It is not necessary to pray only in times of need or of distress; rather, praying in times of pleasure and plenty is also necessary. *A hadith* tells us that one who desires his prayers in the times of sorrow and distress to be answered, should pray in times of happiness and plenty. *(Tirmidhi* cited in *Jami' al Usul)*

Allah has promise in Qur'an 'Pray to Me and I shall fulfill it". This Divine promise can never be wrong so one must pray with Belief and trust in its fulfillment. But fulfillment can take different forms; sometimes one gets what he prays for, but sometimes the desired object is not regarded by Allah as beneficial or useful to his bondsman and so he is granted something better in this life or Hereafter. Thus every act of praying has three advantages:

1. Divine grant of prayers fulfills our desires;

2. Every prayer earns merit; and

3. Repeated acts of praying bring one ever closer to Allah

Although the correct method of praying is to face the *Qiblah* and raise one's hands and pray with tongue, prefacing the prayer with praise of Allah and *darud*, but one can also pray without these preliminaries too. Thus Allah has made the act of praying so easy that one can also, pray almost anywhere and at any time; one can pray while engaged in any activity and if one cannot intone the prayer as e.g. in lavatory, one can think his prayer.

Also it is not necessary to pray for big or important things; one should pray to Allah asking him to fulfil all one's wants, big or small; *hadith* tells us to pray even when one breaks his bootless *(Tirmidhi)*.

Consequently one should develop the habit of asking Allah to fulfil even the smallest need, to seek Divine amelioration of the most ordinary trouble. Just a child calls his mother for everything big or small, one should call and go on calling Allah. No matter what work one may be engaged in, one should always ask Allah for something or the other. Cultivate this habit and see how quickly you rise.

(3) PRAYERS ACCORDING TO SUNNAH

Although one should pray to Allah at all times

for all one's needs, our eternally blessed Prophet has taught us some specific prayers for special occasions at different times of night and day, e.g. upon waking up, when going to the toilet and coming out of it, when performing ablution, upon entering and coming out of the mosque, upon entering the house, before meals and after meals hearing the adhan, when dressing, when looking in mirror, before falling asleep in bed.

These prayers are all-embracing and extremely useful for all our worldly and other-worldly needs. We, by ourselves, can never think of such prayers which the eternally blessed Prophet has taught us. These prayers are not time consuming nor ablution is their precondition nor is one to raise his hands. If one commits them to memory, one reaps a very rich harvest both here and in the Hereafter.

Hence every Muslim must commit these prayers to memory. There are many books wherein they are listed. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi's "Munajat-e-Maqbul" has most of them. You should commit them to memory and ask your children to memorize them too.

PRAYING FOR OTHERS.

One prays for one's own needs and desires, but one should also pray for one's relatives, friends and Muslims in general as it is an act of great merit. There is a hadith which says that when a Muslim prays for anyone of his brothers in faith in the latter's absence angels pray for the same for him. (Sahih Muslim).

Hence if you come to know that any Muslim is in trouble or need, pray for him. In fact one should pray for the unbelievers too so that they may be Divinely guided on to the path of Islam. Thus one gets merit for We act of praying as well as for wishing well for others.

(4) SEEKING PARDON

Seeking Divine pardon is an antidote for the poisoning of human soul by sinning. Every sin against Allah, however heinous 'if may be, is forgiven if one seeks Divine pardon for it. Whenever a sin—great or small—is committed, it should be atoned for by seeking pardon, and even when no sin has been apparently committed, one should seek Divine forgiveness. Every Muslim knows that the eternally blessed Prophet Muhammad was free of all sin, but even then he has said that "I beg for Allah's forgiveness seventy times or more every day.

(*Bukhari*)

In one *hadith* the eternally blessed Prophet is quoted as follows: "Whosoever regularly seeks Allah's pardon, Allah makes for him a way out of all tight corners, removes all his worries and grants him sustenance from sources he had never imagined"(Abu Daud, *Kitab-al-Salat. Bab-al-Istighfar*).

Hence one should cultivate the habit of seeking Divine pardon at all times and at least once a day, one should tell a hundred beads of *Istighfar* on the rosary.

سَيِّدُ الْاِسْتِغْفَار

One can ask for-Divine forgiveness in any language however the Arabic version is givin below

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ رَبِّيْ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَّأَتُوْبُ إِلَيْهِ

One particular form of seeking Divine pardon has been particularly lauded in *hadith,* and it has been designated as Chief of all Prayers for Divine Forgiveness; it is given below:

اَللّٰهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّيْ لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنْتَ خَلَقْتَنِيْ وَأَنَا
عَبْدُكَ، وَأَنَا عَلٰى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ
أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ أَبُوْءُ إِلَيْكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ
عَلَيَّ وَأَبُوْءُ لَكَ بِذَنْبِيْ فَاغْفِرْ لِيْ ذُنُوْبِيْ فَإِنَّهُ
لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ إِلَّآ أَنْتَ۔

Translation: O Allah! You are my Sustainer there is no god but You, You Created me, I am Your bondsman and am to the best of my ability firm on my oath to You. I seek refuge with You against whatever I have done. Whatever boons You have showered on me, I invoke them and turn to You and i also turn to You against my sins. Hence forgive my sins because there is none save You who forgives sins.

Hadith tells us that whosoever intones these words with full faith in the morning and dies before nightfall shall be counted among those of the Paradise, and whosoever says them with full faith at night and dies before morning shall likewise go to paradise. (Sahih *Bukhari, Bab Afdal-al-Istighfar)*

Specially before going to sleep, one should briefly

recall one's shortcomings and wrongdoings of the day and seek Divine Pardon for them and Grace.

(5) DHIKR OF ALLAH

Dhikr i.e. mental or verbal remembrance of Allah is so consoling, pleasant and easy form of worship that one can perform it continuously at all times and with great benefit. Allah has enjoined His *Dhikr in* the Quran in the following words:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

Obviously *dhikr* does not benefit Allah, Who has no need *of* in the benefit is for Allah's bondsmen since *dhikr* strengthens the bond between Allah and His bondsmen, is food for the soul which invigorates *it*. And with an invigorated soul it becomes easy to over*come one's base instincts* and to vanquish the Devil. Thus one is able more easily to avoid sins and the good deeds increase.

Someone asked our eternally blessed Prophet "Which worship is highest, in the Eyes of Allah and which shall be reckoned weightiest on the Day of Judgement?" The Prophet replied *"Dhikr of Allah"* (*Jami'al Usul*, p. 475 Vol. 4)

A companion once submitted to the eternally blessed Prophet "O Messenger of Allah! Good deeds are many and I do not have the strength to perform all of them. So please tell vie one thing that I may always remember. *Please do* not tell me many things

as I would forget them." The Holy Prophet *said "Your* tongue should he wet with dhikr of Allah". (Jami *Tirmidhi, Dawat Bab Fadl al Dhikr)*.

Abu Musa Ash'ari has been quoted as follows: The eternally blessed Prophet said "A house wherein Allah is remembered and a house wherein He is not remembered are like living and dead bodies" *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

Another hadith quotes our Prophet as follows: "People who leave a meeting or conclave without mentioning and remembering Allah are like those who get off from a dead ass, and such a meeting they would repent (for time misspent) on the Day of Judgement" *(Abu Da'ud)*

That's why a *hadith* tells us to recite the following worlds at the end of every meeting or conclave. سُبْحَانَكَ اللّٰهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ.

This atones for the shortcomings of the meeting.

In spite of the great merits of dhikr. Allah has made it very easy. There are no preconditions attached to it. If someone performs ablution and then sits facing *Qibla and performs dhikr* it is all for the best. But if there is no time or occasion for it then one can perform *dhikr* while engaged in other works, even ablution is not required and *dhikr* is permitted even when unclean after coition or while menstruating. However one should not perform it verbally when unclothed or when in some unclean

place like lavatory. However even there dhikr can be done without intoning or moving the tongue. Thus the merits of this worship can be reaped at all times without any difficulty. However it is appropriate to fix a particular time in the night or the day when one can perform dhikr after ablution and facing the qiblah; dhikr at other times would be an added boon.

For special dhikr the following books may be consulted.

1. Fada'il-al-Dhikr by Shaikh al Hadith Hadrat Maulana Muhammad Dhakariyya.

2. Dhikr Allah by Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi.

3. Ma'mulat-e-Yaumiyah by Dr. Abdul Hai Arifi

However some brief adhkar are given below which should be recited continuously.

1. Hadith quotes our eternally blessed Prophet as saying that

"The following four phrases are most pleasing to Allah. (Sahih Muslim)

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَلَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَاللهُ أَكْبَرُ

2. Hadith tells us that two phrases most pleasing to *Al-Rahman* are light on the tongue but view weighty on the Day of Judgement:

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ سُبْحَانَ اللهِ الْعَظِيمِ *(Bukhari Muslim)*

3. *Hadith* tells us to recite لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ much because these words are among the treasures of paradise. *(Mishkat)*

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

4. *Hadith* tells us that if one recites these words in the morning he gets merit equivalent to freeing of ten slaves from among the progeny of Prophet of Islam, he gets ten good deeds recorded in his name, his ten sins are pardoned he is elevated by ten stages and is protected against the Devil till evening. And if he recites these words in the evening; he gets the same reward till morning *(Abu Da'ud)*.

حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ

(6) DARUD

Ahadith mention in detail so many advantages and merits of blessing the holy prophet by reciting Darud that one can compile a whole to me, and many learned people have in fact written books on them. One *hadith* quotes the Holy Prophet as saying that "One sent by my Sustainer came to me and told me that 'Whoever from your ummah sends darud on you once ten good deeds are recorded on his behalf, his ten (minor) sins *are* pardoned and he is elevated by ten stages" *(Sunan Nisai and Musnad Ahmed, Al-targhib li al Mundhari, P.157 volume3)*

And Anas, a companion, has said that the eternally blessed Prophet said that "When my name is mentioned before anyone it is incumbent upon him to send durud on me, and *whosoever* sends darud once, Allah sends his Mercy on him ten times *(ibid.)*

The best *darud* is the *darud-e- Ibrahime* which is *recited* in prayers and the briefest is *Sallallaho alaihi-wa*-sallam, the latter also has the same merits as others. It should be noted that when the holy Prophets* exalted name is written, one writes sallallaho alaihi-wa-Sallam after it and not salla'am which is insufficient.

(7) THANKS GIVING

Allah bestows countless boons on me on every instant; they are countless as Allah Himself says in the Qur'an:

وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا

Shaikh Sa'di has said that if one ignores other boons and mercies, life itself is a boon of highest order, in so fir as the act of breathing itself has two boons of inhalation and exhalation; if breath, goes in and does not came out it is death and if breath goes out and does not cone in it is again death. Hence every breath has two boons for which Allah must be thanked. However even if one thanks Allah once with every breath, it is still insufficient; so how can one adequately thank Allah for other boons and mercies?

Though it is impossible to thank Allah adequately,

but thanking Him to the best of ones ability is a pleasing to Allah and earns countless merits, and also leads to the grant of further boons and mercies, one also get closer to Allah as he has said:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ

In another place, He says:

وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ

Also: لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

Allah likes a thankful bondsman and dislikes a thankless one, since thanklessness is extreme narrow mindedness. A thankless person laments even slightest troubles and ignores the countless mercies and boons; he is more aware of his troubles than of his comforts. A thankful person, on the contrary is thankful,, even in direst troubles, for the innumerable boons he enjoys, while praying, for deliverance from his troubles.

Suppose a person is sick. If he is thankless, he would ignore all other blessings, regard himself as the most troubled and aggrieved person in the world and lament his fate. But if he is a thankful man he would think of the healthful period of his life and then he would think of his treatment of and the presence of his well- wishers and friends as mercies, he would think of people more sick than himself and thank Allah for sparing him more serious sickness, He would pray for his recovery but not by way of complaint, he would pray as a besieger and

pleader. He would never utter anything smacking of thanklessness.

Devil assails man by first making him ungrateful. The Qur'an tells us that when Devil was granted leave till the Day of Judgment he said that he would mislead Allah's bondsmen in every way and he further said:

وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ

This shows that Devil's greatest desire is to make Allah's bondsmen thankless so that they may be bereft of the worship of thankfulness. But if someone is determined to be thankful, he is spared Devil's guile and wile.

Thus thankfulness to Allah is a supreme act of worship which requires only a few moments.

اَلطَّاعِمُ الشَّاكِرُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الصَّائِمِ الصَّابِرِ

He who thanks Allah after eating earns the same merit as one who fasts and desists from eating. (*Bukhari and Tirmidhi*)

Consequently, one must thank Allah for all his boons and mercies, whether big or small. One should thank Allah when on returning home, he finds his family safe and well, when he eats food when his hot brow is fanned by cool breeze, when he sees his child happily at play; in other words everything which pleases and comforts should be acknowledged with thanks to the One Allah who is the Real and the Ultimate Source and intone his thanks, he should do it in his heart.

Saints and learned ones have also instructed that upon going to bed and before falling asleep, one should think of Allah's gifts and boons and thank Him for every one of them. For instance, one should think of the good health of his family and himself; of the house which he lives in, of the comfortable bed he sleeps in, of his own safety and that of his family and thank Allah for these Divine mercies before closing his eyes in sleep.

Real and true thankfulness to Allah implies changing ones ways to into those that please the Almighty, but if one merely expresses his thankfulness in his heart or by mouth, it too is an act of great worship. This can lead to a change for the better in other deeds.

While there are no specific wards prescribed for showing one's gratitude to Allah and He can be thanked in any language, our exalted and eternally blessed Prophet has taught us some compressive words to express our gratitude to our Maker; these are given below.

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا دَائِمًا مَعَ دَوَامِكَ وَلَكَ
الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا خَالِدًا مَعَ خُلُوْدِكَ وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ
حَمْدًا لَا مُنْتَهٰى لَهٗ دُوْنَ مَشِيْئَتِكَ وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ
حَمْدًا لَا يُرِيْدُ قَائِلُهٗ اِلَّا رِضَاكَ وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا
عِنْدَ طَرْفَةِ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ وَتَنَفُّسِ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ

1. O Allah! I thank Thee with a thankfulness that is eternal with Thine Own Eternal Being. I thank Thee with a thankfulness that is unlimited but for Thine Will. And I thank Thee with a thankfulness the speaker of which desires naught but Thine Pleasure And I thank

Thee with every batting of the eyelids and with every breath.

اللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَدَدَ خَلْقِكَ وَمِدَادَ كَلِمَاتِكَ
وَزِنَةَ عَرْشِكَ وَرِضَا نَفْسِكَ

2. O Allah! I praise Thee as many times as the number of Thine creatures, as the blackness of Thine words as the weight of Thine Throne and in accordance with Thine Pleasure.

3. It is reported from Abdullah ibn Ghannam that our exalted and eternally blessed Prophet taught the following words of thankfulness.

اللّٰهُمَّ مَا أَصْبَحَ بِي مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ أَوْ بِأَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ
فَمِنْكَ وَحْدَكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ وَلَكَ الشُّكْرُ

O Allah! Whatever boon I or anyone of Thine creatures get is from Thee only; there is none coeval with Thee hence all praise and all gratitude are for Thee alone.

The Holy Prophet may he be blessed eternally said that whosoever spoke these words in the morning would be thanking Allah for that day and if he spoke these words in the evening he would be thanking Him for that night.

(8) PATIENCE

Allah has created three worlds: one of complete bliss and comfort without any shadow of grief or pain which is Paradise; the second of pain and grief without any shadow of bliss or comfort; which is

Ohell; and then there is the third world where bliss and grief and pain and comfort coexist, and this one is our present world. Consequently, there has never been nor can ever be, a man who has not at some time in his life tasted sorrow. Man, however rich or pious or powerful he may be, would experience pleasure as well as pain; even Allah's chosen messengers have suffered in this world.

Hence, one who wants to be wholly and permanently free of sorrow and pain does not know the nature of this world and this desire of his can never be fulfilled. Of course, the measures of pleasure and pain may vary, but complete and permanent freedom from pain is impossible.

It is thus obvious that every one of us is visited by sorrow and pain in one form or the other. So if his lot impatient and frantic and laments his fate and bewails his lot it would not rid him of pain and sorrow. Such a behavior would, one the one hand,, exacerbate the feeling of pain and sorrow, and, on the other hand, his impatience would be of grave disadvantage to him in so far as the pain and sorrow which could earn him merit and reward would remain barren.

In contrast to this, there is a man who in times of pain and sorrow thinks of the brevity of mundane life and the inevitability of pain and then thinks that whatever Allah does has some Divine Design which man cannot unravel. This man then does not lament his lot nor does he complain; rather his faith in Allah and His doings is strengthened since

whatever Allah does he believes Him to change his pain and sorrow into pleasure and comfort and to save him from such plights in future.

This way of thought is "patience". Patience has the advent age that it brings solace and banishes dismay. Moreover the pain and sorrow thus become causes for boundless reward and merit since Allah says:

إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُم بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

Please note that sorrowing and worrying in times of trouble and trial are not sins, even weeping is sudden shock is not a sin, nor is it an act o impatience. Impatience is to criticize Allah and to lament and complain. Patience is to hold firm to one's faith in Allah even when his whole world is crumbling into rains and heart is heavy with grief anti ewes are brimming with tears. It is this patience for which has been promised boundless reward.

One sign of patience is to repeatedly say:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

For those who recite these words in times of trial and tribulation. Allah has said:

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَ
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ.

Consequently our saints and learned men have rightly said that patience is equal to a thousand acts of worship and it leads to man's spiritual elevation.

It does not require any major catastrophe for one

to show patience and recite:
in everyday life there are many minor pinnipeds which should be countered with the recitation of this ayah.

Umme Salma has quoted our Holy Prophet as saying that

إِذَا أَصَابَتْ أَحَدَكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ فَلْيَقُلْ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ اللَّهُمَّ عِنْدَكَ أَحْتَسِبُ مُصِيبَتِي وَأْجُرْنِي فِيهَا وَأَبْدِلْنِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا.

"When someone of you is afflicted by some pain or is troubled.

A *hadith* tells tis that once when a lamp went out our Holy Prophet recited this ayah.

This clearly shows that إِنَّا لِلَّهِ must be recited when assailed by even minor troubles, and similarly patience should be exercised even in everyday problems and worries so that one gets merit of an act of worship. A sudden stumble, a prick of a thorn, failure of electric power, a bad news, a loss, all should be met with a recital of and it should be firmly believed that some Divine Purpose is at work behind every unpleasant event. This is true patience that ways earns immense amount of merit.

Another point to be remembered is that just as shedding tears over some grievous event is not contrary to patience, trying to ameliorate one's lot and remove e the cause of pain and sorrow tone is not against the practice of patience. Seeking employment when unemployed obviously does not

run counter to the practice of patience. One should try to better one's condition ana also go on praying to Allah. Groaning due to pain is also not contrary to patience. The reality of patience is, as described above, not criticizing or bewailing any Divine decision, and reciting.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ

This recital is simple and brief but it earns immeasurable reward and merit.

(9) BEGINNING ALL IMPORTANT WORK WITH "BISMILLAH"

Recital of "Bismillah" when starting any work is a sign of Muslims. Our blessed and exalted Prophet has said

كُلُّ أَمْرٍ ذِيْ بَالٍ لَمْ يُبْدَأْ فِيْهِ بِبِسْمِ اللّٰهِ فَهُوَ أَبْتَرُ

"*Every* important work not *began with Bumillah remains imperfect and half clone*".

According to the established sunnah of our eternally blessed Prophet, every important[1] work should be started *with Bismillah and* every Muslim must follow it and inculcate this habit. Bismillah should be recited when entering or leaving the house embarking upon a vehicle and upon and upon disembarking from it, when the steed or mount stumbles, when one himself stumbles, upon entering the mosque and coming out of it, a little before entering the lavatory and immediately upon coming out of it, before starting

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1- All good work

to eat and drink, upon starting to dress, before putting on shoes, before reading a book, before writing a letter or anything else, before starting day's work, before entering into a pact, in fact every change of state should be prefaced with Bismillah. Women too should recite it when starting to cook, when serving food, when stitching a dress, when dressing a child; they should also inculcate in their children the habit of reciting Bismillah is very easy and leads to rapid accumulation of much merit in one's record. Recital of *Bismillah* turn mundane activities into acts of worship.

A Muslim and an unbeliever both carry out the daily routines of life but there is immense difference between the two: the unbeliever does everything in a state of unawareness, while a Muslim does whatever he has to do by consciously accepting and realizing the fact that nothing can be accomplished without Divine Will Help and Pleasure. This realization change worldly acts into acts of devotion to, and worship of Allah. The advantages of reciting *Bismillah* have been discussed in detail in "Bismillah kay Fadail-o-Masa'il" by the author's father Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi: its study shall be of great benefit.

(10) TO PRECEDE IN GREETING

Greeting brother Muslims is one of these Islamic practices which are hallmark of a Muslim and its merits have been anointed in many ahadith. e.g. "One who takes pretence in greeting others is closer

to Allah". (Abu Daud)

It is not necessary to greet only those with whom one is acquainted; greeting strangers who are known to be Muslims is a matter of great merit

Our holy Prophet, may lie be Divine, blessed eternally, was asked as to which action are good for Muslims. Among the actions which our holy Prophet enumerated was this: "You should greet people whether you know their or not" (Sahih *Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)*

It is reported about Abdullah bin Omar that sometimes he went out of the house only to greet any Muslims he met and thus to increase his merit. *(Muvatta Imam Malik)*

The correct interpretation of this hadith, however, is that one should greet others, though not everyone one sees because it is impossible and it might also be embarrassing for others. (Al Adab al Shariah, li ibn Muslih page 422, volume 1)

It is also a *sunnah* to greet the family when entering the house. Our holy Prophet instructed his personal servant Anas as follow:

"O son! When you enter (your) house, greet your family member; this act shall be of benefit for *both you and your family members" (Tirmidhi)*

Even when entering an empty house one should greet with the intent that angels are being greeted. Abdullah ibn Omar used to say :

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَىٰ عِبَادِ اللّٰهِ الصَّالِحِيْنَ

on such occasions (Al *Adalf al Shariah li ibn Muslih,* p.424, vol.1)

Hadith also urges the muslims to clearly speak out the greeting so that it may be heard and understood. Although the *sunnah* of greeting to fulfilled by saying "*Al Salam Alaikum* ", but adding "wa Rahmat ulla-wa barakatuhu" earns more merit.

Imran bin Husayn recounts that once he and others were in the presence of our exalted and eternally blessed Prophet when a man came and said: السلام عليكم "As-salamo alaikum", to which the blessed Prophet responded and said "Ten" (i.e. the person who had greeted him, had earned ten merits); then another man came and he said "السلام عليكم ورحمة الله" "*Assalamo alaikum wa Rahmatullah*", to which the blessed Prophet responded and said 'Twenty' (i.e. the man had earned twenty merits); finally a third man came and said *salamo alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuhu"),* to which the exalted Prophet responded and said "Thirty" (i.e. he had earned thirty merits) (Abu *Daud, Tirmidhi, Jami al Usul, p.602. vol. 6),*

It should be noted here, however, that *salam* i.e. greeting is a *sunnah* only when the person greeted is not busy or when *salam* would not disturb him; if *salam* is going to disturb him in whatever he is doing, e.g. reciting Qur'an or doing dhikr or tending the sick or studying or doing something else in which loss of concentration would cause loss, the one should wait till the work is finished.

Similarly it is not right to *salaam* when somebody is making a speech, and speaker too should not do it.

However if a group is sitting quietly and somebody passes by then he should greet them; if someone wishes to join them then just *one salaam* is enough and single response from one of the group fulfills the *sunnah.*

To be the first with *salam is sunnah* and he who does not reply to it is a sinner.

When a letter is received in which " السلام عليكم " "salaam alaikum" is written, it should be responded to in the prescribed manner while reading the letter.

(11) VISITING THE SICK

Visiting the sick is an act of great merit and is included in the human rights an enunciated by the exalted Prophet, may he be blessed always. Some jurists regard it *vajib,* but in fact it is a *sunnah.*

Thauban relates that our Holy and eternally blessed Prophet has said that "when a Muslim visits his sick brother in faith, he is all the time in the garden of Paradise. *(Kitab al Birr wa al Silah* and *Tirmidhi. Kitabal-Khabaiz)*

Ali has said that he heard our Holy Prophet saying that "When a Muslim goes to visit another ailing Muslim in the morning, seventy thousand angels pray for his forgiveness till evening, and if he goes visiting till the evening, seventy thousand angels pray for his forgiveness till morning and he is granted a garden in the Paradise". *(Tirmidhi. Kitab al KhabaiZ. Hadith 969).*

Our exalted and eternally blessed Prophet,

hearing of sickness of anyone among his acquaintances, went to visit him.

The correct way of visiting the sick is to put one's hand on the sick man's forehead and inquire after his illness, but only if putting the hand on his forehead does not cause the sick one pain otherwise it is sufficient to ask how he was.

Out exalted Prophet has taught us the following prays which is to be recited seven time when visiting the sick:-

أَسْأَلُ اللهَ الْعَظِيْمَ رَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ أَنْ يَّشْفِيَكَ

This prayer heals the sick, provided his time of death has not come.

Our holy Prophet also used to recite the following prayers several times while visiting the sick:-

أَذْهِبِ الْبَأْسَ رَبَّ النَّاسِ وَاشْفِ أَنْتَ الشَّافِي لَا شِفَاءَ
إِلَّا شِفَاءُكَ شِفَاءً لَّا يُغَادِرُ سَقَمًا۔

and also said

لَا بَأْسَ، طَهُوْرٌ إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ

It should be remembered that the visitors actions should never cause the slightest trouble or pain to sick and this has been emphasized more than visiting the sick. A visit which pains or trouble the sick would be a sin rather than act of merit.

Thus if visitors are not allowed to see the patient, they must not visit; in such a case mere

asking and praying for the patient become an act of merit. There is no need to have one's visit reported to the sick man. But if it is intended to please the patient then the names of the visitors may be told to him at sonic appropriate time

Hadith has also emphasized that visitor must not stay very long with the sick man because it might harm the patient. However, if the patient wants someone intimate to stay with him then there is no harm in staying long.

It is also necessary to choose the right time for the visit; it is not right to visit a patient when he is resting or is otherwise engaged. Hence it is better to find out beforehand the appropriate time for a visit.

(12) PARTICIPATION IN BURIAL SERVICE (NAMAZ-E-JANAZAH) AND BURIAL

Participation in the burial service of a Muslim and accompaniment of the funeral procession up to the graveyard have been designated as acts of great merit in *ahadith*; in fact our most exalted Prophet has called it a right of the dead that the living ones pray for them and accompany them to graveyard.

Although participation in burial service and burial are *fard kifayah*, i.e. if a few do these, it does not remain compulsory for others, yet both are acts of great merit.

Abu Hurairah has reported that our holiest

Prophet said that "Whosoever participates in burial service *(namaz-e-janazah)* carps one carat and if he remains till burial is complete, then he gets two carats, each carat being equal to the Mount of Ohud".

They should participate in this prayer not as a matter of pure form but for the sake of Allah's pleasure; this would certainly fetch much merit. Accompanying the funeral procession after the prayers is, as said above, an act of great goodness which, according to Mujahid, is of a higher order than *nafl* prayers. *(Fath-al-Bari*, p.193, vol 3, ref. Abd-al-Razzaq).

(13) CONDOLENCE AND CONSOLING

It is an act of great merit to offer condolences on somebody's death and to console the bereaved family by word and deed. Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud has quoted our beloved Prophet (may Allah eternally bless him) as saying: مَنْ عَزَّى مُصَابًا فَلَهُ مِثْلُ اَجْرِهٖ

> *One who condoles with or consoles a troubled man get as much merit as the troubled man gets for his grief.*

(Jami' Tirmidhi, Kitab-al-Jana'iz, Hadith 1073)

It may be noted that condolence is generally taken to mean expression of grief and so, instead of consoling and comforting the bereaved family, causes them more grief. Condolence actually means consoling and sympathizing, hence it encompasses all ways and means of comforting the mourners and giving them solace and reducing their anguish.

The act of comforting does not deserve and earn merit only when someone dies: the *Hadith* quoted above shows that comforting and commiserating with anyone who is in pain, trouble or sorrow ears the same merit as the sufferer is getting for his suffering.

(i) These words occur in the tradition quoted in Jami' Tirmidhi. (Tirmidhi: Kitab-al-Jana'iz. Hadith 1040, chapter 49) but actual hadith has also been quoted in

(14) TO LOVE FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH

To have love for someone for the sake of Allah's pleasure is also a grand act for which much merit and many rewards have been promised. "To love for the sake of Allah" means loving someone, not for any worldly gain, but because he is more religious and pious or he is very learned in *din* or is busy in serving the cause *of din* or because loving him or her is commanded by Allah, e.g. one's parents.

Such a love has been called "love for Allah" in *ahadith.*

One *hadith* says:

Allah shall ask on the Day of Judgment, "Where are those who loved for the sake *of* My Greatness? Today when there is no shade save Mine, I shall have them in My Shade" *(Sahih* Muslim: Kitab al Birr wa al Silah)

Another tells us that 'On the Day *of* Judgment.

Those who had mutual love for the sake of Allah's Greatness shall be on pulpits *of* light and all shall envy them (Jami' *Tirmidhi, Kitab al Zuhd)*

Abu Idris Khulani, one of the famous *tabi'in* says that once he visited Muadh ibn Jabal in the mosque of Damascus and told him that "By Allah I love you for the sake of Allah". He repeatedly asked me to swear if it was so and when I answered in affirmative every time he pulled me by my shawl and said "Hear the good news! I have heard the exalted and blessed Messenger of Allah saying that "My love shall certainly be for those who love each other for my sake, who sit in each other's company for my sake, who go to meet each other for my sake and spend money on each other for my sake." *(Muvatta Imam Malik,* Kitab-al-Shi'r).

Having love for Allah's pious and good bondsmen is actually an outcome of one's love for Allah, so it earns the same rewards and merits as the latter, because of this love. Allah includes His lover in His beloved people. According to a *hadith,* someone asked our blessed and exalted Prophet". When shall come the Day of Judgment?" Our Prophet asked hits "What preparation have you made for the Day?" The man said "Nothing, but I have love for Allah and for his Messenger". The Prophet said "You shall be (on that Day) with whom you love."

The above *hadith* has been quoted by Anas. He says that these words of the Holy Prophet mere so pleased us as nothing else had ever done. He further said " I have great love for the Holy Prophet - may he

be eternally blessed - and with Abu Bakr and Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, and because of this love I hope I shall be in their company, even though my deeds arc not equal to theirs." *(Sahih Bukhari, kitabal-Adab, chapter' Alamah al Hubb fi Allah).*

There are many *ahadith* of the same import showing that having love for someone for the sake of Allah is an act of great merit, which grants one the opportunity of doing good in this world and being in exalted company in the Hereafter.

Hence one should love good people for the sake of Allah and with the intent of becoming good oneself and earning Allah's pleasure, as the poet says:

أُحِبُّ الصَّالِحِينَ وَلَسْتُ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلَّ اللّٰهَ يَرْزُقُنِي صَلَاحًا

"I love good people (and) although I am not one of them, may Allah grant me goodness too.

Hadith tells us that when one someone loves his brother in faith, he must tell him of his love (Abu Daud: *Kitab-al-Adab;* Tirmidhi: *kitab-al-Zuhd).*

Anas has recounted that someone was sitting with our Holy Prophet when another one passed. The sitting one said "O Messenger of Allah! I love this man". The Prophet said "Have you told him?" The man said "No". The Prophet said "Tell him!" The man rose to his feet and went to the man who was passing and said "I love you for the sake of Allah". He said "May Allah Whom you love, love you in return!"

(15) HELPING A MUSLIM

To help a Muslim in some important work and to do it for his sake or to remove his troubles and worries is an act which has been promised much reward by the Prophet:

Abdullah bin Omar said that our Holy Prophet said:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ، وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللهُ عَنْهُ بِهَا كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ۔

"One who helps someone in his need, Allah helps him in his work, and one who removes any worry or trouble of any Muslim, Allah, in return, removes anyone of his worries on the Day of Judgment". (Abu Daud, Kitab-al-Adab, Bad-al-Mu vakhao

Telling someone the way, sharing someone's load or helping him with it, and all other acts of public service are included in the acts defined by this *hadith*. "Those who help others are truly much blessed," as the hadith says:-

خَيْرُ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ

"Best people are those who are useful to others".

Hence all occasions of service, big or small, must be sought for; this increases one's merits. If someone is a victim of tyranny, it is the duty of every Muslim to save him from it.

A *hadith* tells us that the Holy Prophet said "A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim", and a brother does not leave his brother helpless nor does he lie to him nor yet makes false promises, nor treats him with cruelty" (Tirmidhi: Al *Birr wa-al- Silah)*

Another *hadith* runs as follows:

"If a *Muslim* is being insulted and degraded and his honor somewhere and mother Muslim leaves him helpless, Allah would leave the latter helpless on occasions when he would need help. And if any Muslim helps him in when he is insulted and degraded, Allah shall help him when he would need help" (Abu Da'ud: Adab)

Helping a Muslim includes appropriate refutal of any wrong charges or insinuations levelled against another Muslim.

Abu Darda' report that our Holy Prophet has said:

مَنْ ذَبَّ عَنْ عِرْضِ أَخِيهِ رَدَّ اللّٰهُ النَّارَ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

"One who defends the honer of his brother, Allah keeps the fire of hell away from his face on the Day of Judgment (Tirmidhi: al Birr wa al Silah, Chapter 20)

(16) JUSTIFIED RECOMMENDATION

To give justified recommendation for someone is an act of great merit. The Holy Qur'an says:

مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ نَصِيبٌ مِنْهَا اِشْفَعُوا تُؤْجَرُوا

and the Holy Prophet has said:-

Make recommendation; you shall earn merit. {Abu Daud and Nisa'i}

Once a man asked the Holy Prophet for something; the Messenger of Allah turned to others and said "Recommend him, so that may you earn merit {*Bukhari Kitab al Adab*}.

A good recommendation, whether affective or ineffective, is in itself a good deed. If it is effective then it might carp double merit.

But it should be noted that the recommendation should be for some correct purpose and not for any unlawful purpose because recommendation for some thing unlawful is a grave sin with graver consequences. Hence it is necessary to be absolutely sure that the person recommended is truly deserving of it, and whatever he is being recommended for is justified and lawful.

Another point to be noted is that the recommendation should not unduly burden the person to whom the recommendation is being made, first of all it must be assessed if the person is really able to do what is recommended; if not, then recommendation should not be made as it might embarrass hire. If one cannot know whether the person to which recommendation is made is able to act on it or not, then recommendation should not be pressing and one should ask for the work to be done if it can be done.

Sometimes even when a person is able to do

something, he still has to follow some rules or preferences of his own. In such a case too one should not make specific recommendation but leave it to the person to do it according to his rules and preferences so that he may not be unduly burdened.

Nowadays recommendation is made for the sake of its merit in the hereafter but its riles as formulated *by shari'ah* are not observed. Especially, people do not consider the trouble they may cause to the person to whom recommendation is being made. Remember that there are rules for everything in shariah which have to be followed; it is not at all permissible to unduly trouble anyone even for the sake of another Muslim.

(17) CONCEALING OTHER'S SHORTCOMINGS.

If one conies to know of somebody's shortcomings it is a matter of great merit if he conceals it front others provided this shortcoming is not handful or dangerous for others. According to Abu Huraira, our Holy Prophet has said that:

> *"Allah shall conceal on the Day of Judgement the shortcomings of the one who conceals the shortcomings of other"*
> *(Sahih Muslim: Kitab al Birr wa Silah)*

And Aqabah ibn Amir relates that our eternally blessed Prophet has said that:

"The action of one who conceals the shortcoming of another is as if he saved a girl from being buried alive (Mustadrik Hakim. p.334, volume 4)

(18) PREACHING GOOD

To urge others to goodness is also an act of great merit. If someone agrees to do good due to another mains efforts, both shall earn equal merits and reward.

Abu Mas'ud Ansari relates that our eternally blessed Prophet has said "One who guides another to goodness shall earn as much merit as the doer of the good deed' (Sahih Muslim).

If the guidance towards good is in the form of a collective effort, i.e. many persons are guided and consequently do good, the reward of the good deeds of all goes to the guide also (in addition to the rewards due to actual doers).

Abu Hurairah recounts that our Holy Prophet said:,

مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى هُدًى كَانَ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ مِثْلُ أُجُورِ مَنْ
تَبِعَهُ، لَا يَنْقُصُ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْئًا. وَمَنْ دَعَا
إِلَى ضَلَالَةٍ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ مِثْلُ آثَامِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ
لَا يَنْقُصُ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ آثَامِهِمْ شَيْئًا

One who calls others to the right path of good

deeds gets as much merits as those who act upon his guidance, and the merits of the doers arc not reduced thereby. And one who calls others to do wrong sins as much as the collective sins of those who follow him in sinning and their sins shall not be reduced at all" *(Sahih Muslim).*

While merit is vouchsafed when others respond to guidance, the very act of guidance to good, whether responded to or not, is one of great merit because hadith tells us that:

أَمْرٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ صَدَقَةٌ وَنَهْيٌ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ صَدَقَةٌ

Giving order to do good is a form of Sadaqah and stopping (someone) from going evil is also a form of *Sadaqah*
(Sahih Muslim).

Hence no opportunity of giving good advice to and guiding others should be lost, but care should be taken to adopt a method for this which is not insulting or irksome to the other man. One should not criticize others in Public nor should one adopt an overbearing anti proud stance, advice should be given in privacy and in a soft tune showing one's sympathy anti cornifications hence one should chose a time for advice when the hearer is not worried. Wisdom should be exercised in this anti intent should be of doing good, since the Qur'an says:

(19) SADAQAH AND CHARITY

Sadaqah and charity are both acts of great merit anti effective means of earning Divine pardon and escaping the fires of hell. Qur'an and *hadith* too are replete with the merits of spending money as sadaqah and in charity: in fact one can do justice to this topic in a book only. Shaikh al hadith Maulana Mohammed Zakaria Kandhalvi has written a book "Kitab al Sadaqat" which is indeed an excellent encyclopedic work on this topic. Hence there is no need to describe in detail the merits of sadaqah and charity: those who desire can consult this book.

What we wish to bring to the reader's attention here is that it is not at all necessary to spend overmuch to gain merit; one has to spend only as much as he can afford. If one has only a Rupee and lie spends one paisa on some good work it is as if a man with a hundred thousand rupees spends a thousand. Allah does not care for human wealth; Allah values the purity of intent. Maximum *sadaqah* with pure intent is as much pleasing to Allah as great spending, and cams much merit anti reward. Our exalted and blessed Prophet has said:

اِتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ

"Escape the fire of hell he it by the length of half a date"

(Sahih Bukhari – Sahih Muslim)

This hadith means that if one has nothing save half a slate, and he gives to another who needs it,

it too would a *sadaqah* and would earn merit and lead to Divine pardon.

This hadith also clearly shows that the poor should not think that they cannot earn merit through *sadaqah:* by spending whatever they can afford, they tots can cam this merit.

There are some who, after paying *zakat,* believe that they have done all that is required from them and do not spent a paisa more; this is not justified. *Zakat is* a duty and the money is to be spent for very specific purposes only. There are many other good deeds which lie outside the imbed of *Zakat* e.g. contributing to mosque fund. Hence some money over and above *Zakat* should be spent on outer good deeds too. Our spiritual elders anti saints always set aside a certain portion of their incomes for charitable purposes. Maulana Thanvi always reserved one-fifth of his income for this, others reserved one-tenth or one-twentieth part. The advantage of this practice is that whenever the occasion arises, the money is already set aside and available; this availability is also a reminder.

If everyone regularly sets aside some part of his income, he can easily earn much merit and reward:

Sadaqah and *Khairat* (charity) should have only one purpose, viz. obtaining the pleasure of Allah. Those who give away money for these purpose arc amply rewarded by Allah in this world too. *Hadith* tells us than "*Sadaqah* does not reduce wealth:

(20) FORGIVENESS

Although an aggrieved person has every right to avenge himself within the bounds of *shari'ah,* but forgiveness is an act of supreme merit. The holy Qur'an says:

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

There is none in this world who is entirely innocent and has never done wrong or committed a mistake, and everyone craves Allah's pardon. Therefore, when someone makes a mistake the aggrieved person should think of himself as a seeker of Divine pardon and forgive the wrong doer. The above *ayah* indicates that a forgiving person can expect Divine forgiveness for his own faults and misdeeds.

There are many other *ahadith of* the same purport: e.g. Abu Darda' relates that our exalted and blessed Prophet has said that:-

مَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ يُصَابُ بِشَيْءٍ فِي جَسَدِهِ فَيَتَصَدَّقُ بِهِ
إِلَّا رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ بِهِ دَرَجَةً وَحَطَّ عَنْهُ بِهِ خَطِيئَةً

"If a person is given physical pain and he forgives it, Allah the Highest elevates his rank and pardons his sins"

One reads in *Jami' Tirmidhi* that someone had broken a person's tooth, and the assaulted person came to Amir Mu'awiyah's court to obtain redress. There Abu Darda related to him the above *Hadith* and he gave up the idea of revenge and forgave his assaulter *(Jami' Tirmidhi: kitab al Diyat: Hadith 1412)*

The point to ponder is that if the aggrieved person does not forgive and gets his due revenge, what shall this revengė achieve:' If the injury inflicted is such that it cannot be avenged then not forgiving it would cause the one who inflicted the injury to suffer in the Hereafter. Here one should stop and think how another one's suffering in the Hereafter would benefit the one aggrieved or in injured in this world. Forgiveness here, on the contrary, brings abeut Divine forgiveness for the forgiver, and escape from hell, and Allah the Highest shall pardon his sins. Reason, therefore, tells us to exercise forgiveness.

Forgiveness, it should be borne in mind, means here that no revenge is to be sought in this world or in the Hereafter. Such a forgiveness earn much merit.

However it is not necessary that the act of forgiving is followed by rapprochement. The latter is involuntary not forced and depends largely upon the future behaviors of the other person. Thus if one forgives anti yet has mental reserves towards the aggressor or transgressor and is unable to maintain cordial rcaltions with him save in the matter of rights (salaam etc.) he too shall earn merit for his forgiveness.

Forgiveness also does not imply letting down one's guard against any future aggression. If such an aggression is feared then any step that is taken to safeguard oneself against it is not contrary to forgiveness. In such a case if the previous wrong is pardoned and help, even official help is sought against

future wrong doing. This too would not detract from the merit earned for earlier forgiveness.

When the urge to avenge oneself upon the wrongdoer awakens, one must pause long enough to reflect that our Holy and Revered Prophet never avenged himself upon anyone. Even when the unbelievers stoned him and blood flowed from his face, He said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِقَوْمِي فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ .

"Oh Allah' Forgive my people. as they do not know" (Sahih Bukhari Sahih Muslim)

(21) TENDERNESS/KINDNESS

Tenderness towards others is very pleasing to Allah and is very meritorious. Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her always) relates that our holy Prophet has said:-

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرِّفْقَ وَيُعْطِي عَلَى الرِّفْقِ مَا لَا يُعْطِي عَلَى الْعُنْفِ، وَمَا لَا يُعْطِي عَلَى مَا سِوَاهُ .

"Allah is kind and likes kindness and gives that reward for tenderizes which is not ,granted for harmless nor for anything else". (Sahih Muslim)

In another *hadith* related by Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her). our Prophet (may he be eternally blessed) says that: إِنَّ الرِّفْقَ لَا يَكُونُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ وَلَا يُنْزَعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ

"Tenderness adorns everything and would make it ugly" (Sahih Muslim)

Tenderness means that one must avoid using harsh words or harsh attitude in anger, and behave and speak with tenderness. If someone has to be checked or if a difference in opinion is to expressed, one should not be rough or harsh, but speak softly and kindly. If a younger person has to be trained and strictness cannot be avoided, it too should be adopted in moderation or to the extent needed.

Kind behavior also implies that one must not argue or quarrel with others on every issue and think well of them as far as possible. Even haggling over price should not be harsh or acrimonious. One should be ready to accept another's viewpoint if it is acceptable, and when if it is not so one should withdraw from argument. It is not good to compel others to agree with one's own viewpoint and to force them into submission.

Jabir has related that our exalted that our blessed Prophet said that

رَحِمَ اللّٰهُ رَجُلاً سَمْحًا إِذَا بَاعَ وَإِذَا اشْتَرَى وَإِذَا اقْتَضَى

"Allah is kind to him who is tender and forgiving in selling as well as buying and even when asking others for his due". (Sahih Bukhari).

Hudhaifah ibn Yaman has related that our blessed Prophet said that.

"A bondsman of Allah who was given much

wealth would be brought before Allah and would be asked 'what did you do in the world'" He would submit that 'Oh my Nourisher. Thou hadst given me Thine wealth and I traded with it and I was forgiving, so I made it things easy for the rich and allowed time to the poor'. Allah would say 'I have more right to behave in this manner' and would then turn to His Angels and command them 'Release my this bondsman'. (Sahih Muslim)

Abu Hurairah has quoted our blessed Prophet as saying that:-

مَنْ أَنْظَرَ مُعْسِرًا أَوْ وَضَعَ لَهُ أَظَلَّهُ اللّٰهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
تَحْتَ ظِلِّ الْعَرْشِ يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ

"One who gives time to the poor debtor or gives him some relief,. Allah would keep him in the shade of His throne in the Day of Judgement when there would be no shade Save that of His Throne". (Jami Tirmidhi)

Abu Qatadah has quoted our revered and respected Prophet as saying that:-

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُنْجِيَهُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ
فَلْيُنَفِّسْ عَنْ مُعْسِرٍ أَوْ يَضَعْ عَنْهُ

"One who desires to be relieved of the pains and worries of the way of Judgement, should ease the troubles of the destitute or ease his loan. (Sahih Muslim)

(22) PEACE MAKING

Peacemaking between two Muslims who differ among themselves is an act of immense merit. The Holy Qur'an says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

and also: فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ

These verses clearly show how sublime it is to make peace between two Muslims and to try to restore good relations between than. For this purpose one should tell both of them things about cacti other which may reawaken love and affection between them and remove their misunderstandings. In this connection one can relate even those things which may apparently scent contrary to facts. For example to tell one of the two quarreling parties that the other person prayed for every other Muslim which included his adversary. Our holy Prophet inlay he be eternally blessed) has said the following for such an act:

> *"He is not a liar who makes peace between two persons and conveys good thing from one to another or says anything good"*
>
> *(Sahih, Bukhari, Muslim)*

Another *hadith* gives the following Prophetic quotation:

يَعْدِلُ بَيْنَ الاثْنَيْنِ صَدَقَةٌ

"To do justice between two persons (meritorious) like (giving) Sadaqah

To create bad blood and enmity among people is a diabolical act anti a *hadith* tells us that nothing is snore pleasing to the Devil than creating discord among then. Hadith tells us that Devil regards sowing: discord between husband and wife as his greatest achievement.

In contrast to thus, trying to snake peace anti bring about rapprochement between husband and wife is an act of great merit.

This should be especially remembered by those who live together, the family quarells among in-laws which are so common in our society are usually due to ignorance of the basic rules of Islam. If one follows the Islamic rules anti precepts in letter and spirit his Here and Hereafter shall both be pleasant for him.

(23) HELPING THE ORPHANS AND THE WIDOWS

Helping orphans and widows is also a very meritorious act, as the Qur'an tells us:

يَسْئَلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْيَتٰمٰى قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ

Sahl ibn Sa'd. a companion has related that"

أَنَا وَكَافِلُ الْيَتِيْمِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ هٰكَذَا، وَأَشَارَ بِالسَّبَّابَةِ وَالْوُسْطٰى، وَفَرَّجَ بَيْنَهُمَا.

"The Holy Prophet said 'I and guardian of orphan shall be like this in the Paradise' making a gesture with the first two fingers with a very small distance between them.

Guardianship of an orphan has been so much elevated by this *hadith* that if is difficult to conceive its merits. Who can imagine the merits of closeness to the Holy Prophet which he indicated by his two fingers.

" According to Abu Hurairah, our exalted anti eternally blessed Prophet also explained that whether an orphan's guardian is related to him, e.g. mother, grandfather, brother etc. or not, he shall entitled to merit in both cases *(Riyad al Salihin. p. 118* quoted from Muslim}

As regards widows,. Abu Hurairah has related The Holy Prophet said that

الساعي على الارملة والمسكين كالمجاهد في سبيل الله،
واحسبه قال، وكالقائم الذي لا يفتر، وكالصائم الذي لا يفطر،

"One, who exerts in the cause of a widow or a destitute person, is like a crusader in the cause of a widow Allah,' (it is reported by chromidroses)

I also think that the Holy Prophet also said that 'He is like one who continuously stands in prayer without break and is like one who fasts without break". *(Sahih Bukhari and Muslim).*

Abu Huraira has also related the following hadith

of our beloved Prophet:

"The best Muslim homestead is the one where an orphan is treated well and the worst one is that where an orphan is ill-treated ". *(Al Targhib li al Mundhiri. p.127, vol 4, quoted from Ibn Majah)*

Qur'an and *Ahadith* are both replete with injunctions to help, aid and assist the orphans and widows. The few *ayahs* and Prophetic sayings quoted above show how much thus action is appreciated by Allah. Hence, whenever there is a chance to help an orphan or a widow, it should never be lost and whatever good one can do to either should be done; this shall - Allah willing - earn the doer much merit, provided the good deed is done with sincerity and not to impress others or hold them in thrill, and the real intent is to carp the Divine Pleasure only. Even if one is thanked or paid for the good deed, one should not regard it as a payment for services rendered, but should look to Allah for reward.

(24) SPENDING ON FAMILY

Barring a few insensitive and selfish persons, there is none in this world who does not spend money on his family; the only purpose of the struggle for earning a living is to provide one's family with their needs and to make their life easy and comfortable. Few know, however, that this effort too is an act of great merit in the eyes of Allah.

According to Abu Hurairah, our Holy Prophet

said that "There is one dinar which you spend in the way of Allah (for jihad), another is that you spend on freeing a slave, another is that which you give a poor man by way of *charity, and there is another dinar which you spend on your family (wife and children), the dinar that you spend on your wife and children has the highest merit" (Sahih Muslim).*

The reason why spending on one's own family is superior to other spending's is that providing for one's family is a duty *(fard),* while other arc by way of *nafl* in nature; obviously fard earns more merit than *nafl*. It also makes the point that spending on one's family has more merit when the family is needy, but when their needs are fulfilled in the proper way, then it is more meritorious to spend on others.

Umme Salmah once asked our eternally blessed Prophet "O *Messenger of* Allah! Do I earn merit even when I spend on my sons from my previous husband Abu Salmah'! They are after all my sons and I cannot abandon them". The Holy Prophet replied "Yes you shall get merit for it".

Sa'ad ibn Waqqas relates, that our eternally blessed Prophet said that:

إِنَّكَ لَنْ تُنْفِقَ نَفَقَةً تَبْتَغِي بِهَا وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ إِلَّا أُجِرْتَ
بِهَا حَتَّى مَا تَجْعَلُ فِي فِي امْرَأَتِكَ۔

"Whatever you spend for the sake of earning Pleasure of Allah - even for the food you put in your wife's mouth - earns merit" *(Bukhari, Muslim)*

All these *ahadith* clearly prove that if one spends money to fulfil the lawful needs of his family with the intent of giving them their Divinely ordained rights as commanded by Allah and of pleasing Allah, then every expenditure urns him the same merit as *sadaqah*.

Behold how infinitely kind and gracious is Allah that what one does solely to satisfy his own inner urges has been changed by a slight change of intent into an act of such merit that it has become superior to all other *sadaqah* and expenditures. Hence to please Allah, one should openly spend to fulfill the lawful needs of one's family and should never regret it.

(25) GOOD TREATMENT OF PARENTS

Good treatment of parents has been very much emphasized in the Qur'an as well as *ahadith*. Parents have priority in matter of human rights and also they have more rights them others. For instance read the following verses of the Qur'an:

وَاعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهٖ شَيْئًا وَّبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا

And serve Allah. Ascribe nothing as partner unto him. Show kindness unto parents.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud relates "Once I asked holy Messenger of Allah - may he be eternally blessed - what action pleased Allah most. He replied "To pray at the right time". I asked "What is the next action?" He said "Good treatment of one's parents." I asked

"What is the next action"" He said "Jihad in the way of Allah". *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

Abdullah ibn Omar relates: "Once a person came to the Messenger of Allah and expressed his desire to participate in *jihad* in order to please Allah. The Holy Prophet asked him "Are your parents alive:'" The man said "Yes. Both are alive". The Holy Prophet said "Then go and serve them well". Another version say that the Holy Prophet said "Serve them and then perform Jihad". (*Bukhari and Muslim*)

The *ahadith* tell us that if one's parents need services then he must go on serving them Jihad does not become absolutely necessary (fard-e-'ain), as serving the parents is superior to Jihad. It is also widely known that Owais Qarni lived in Yaman and desired to visit the Holy Prophet. But since his mother needed his services, our Holy Prophet ordered him not to conic but to take care of his mother. Thus Owais Qarni could not visit and see the Holy Prophet; however, as a reward for his serving his mother, he was granted such a status by Allah that many important companions asked him to pray for them. When he finally came to Madinah during the Caliphate of Omar, the latter rushed to him to ask for his blessings.

Serving the parents is normally easy since love for parents is but natural and one is automatically motivated to serve and help them and take care of them. Then parents love their children and do not wish to unduly trouble them, or to make them do thing that are difficult. A little service is enough to please them and earn their blessings. According to one *hadith*

looking at parents with love has merits equal to Umrah and Haj. Thus by serving one's parents, a man can earn much merit. Our Holy and eternally blessed Prophet has said

> *"May that person be disgraced, may that person be disgraced who, finds either or both of his parents in old age, and yet is not able to enter the Paradise"*
>
> *(Muslim)*

It means that it is easy to earn Paradise by serving, helping and taking care of old parents, and whosoever doe not do it deserves disgrace.

Mother has been given more right to children's love and service than the father. Abu Hurairah relates: "A person came to our Holy Prophet and asked 'O Messenger of Allah! Which one among the people is most deserving of my good treatment?' The Holy Prophet replied 'Your mother!'. Then man asked, 'Then?'. The Holy Prophet again said ' Your mother'. Upon being asked the fourth time, the Holy Prophet replied, 'Your father'". *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

It is on the basis of this *hadith* that the theologians have opined that mother has thrice the right of the father on her children. This is obviously because mother has greater responsibilities then father in bringing up and rearing children; her troubles have been especially mentioned in the Qur'an. Moreover, she needs more help in her old age than the father . This is why mother is placed higher than father by Allah.

Taking care of parents is in any case one of the fundamental duties of man but taking care of them in their old age has been particularly emphasized in the Qur'an.

وقضى ربك الا تعبدوا الا اياه وبالوالدين احسانا
اما يبلغن عندك الكبر احدهما او كلاهما فلا تقل
لهما اف ولا تنهرهما وقل لهما قولا كريما واخفض
لهما جناح الذل من الرحمة وقل رب ارحمهما كما
ربياني صغيرا (بنی اسرائیل: ۲۳، ۲۴)

The emphasis is because in their old age, the parents are no longer able to be of any physical or monetary use for their offspring and so, often selfish children abandon them. Moreover, in advanced age, one is sometimes short tempered and their words and whims create resentment. So the Qur'an has asked us to remember how our parents cared for us when we were helpless in our infancy and how they pampered us and hence it is now our turn to pamper them, to bear with them with patience and serve them and take care of them.

It is after seen that parents are ignored when they are alive and when they die, they are remembered anti it is regretted that they were ignored and no care was taken of them. But then it is too late. So every opportunity of earning for them should be

taken.

However, even after their death one can still go on serving the parents. Abu Usaid has related that "One day we were with the eternally blessed Messenger of Allah when a person from (the tribe of) Bana Salmah came and asked him, 'O Messenger of Allah! Is there any way I can treat my parents well after death'" the Holy Prophet replied:

نَعَمْ اَلصَّلٰوةُ عَلَيْهِمَا، وَالْاِسْتِغْفَارُ لَهُمَا،
وَاِنْفَاذُ عَهْدِهِمَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمَا، وَصِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ
الَّتِيْ لَا تُوْصَلُ اِلَّا بِهِمَا وَاِكْرَامُ صَدِيْقِهِمَا

'Yes. Pray for them, pray for their forgiveness, fulfil their promises after them, be courteous and kind to their relatives and respect their friends".

The methods preached by our beloved and ever-exalted Holy Prophet can always be followed.

(26) COURTESY AND KINDNESS TO PARENTS RELATIVE AND FRIENDS

As the *hadith* quoted in the last section shows, dutiful and good behavior not only towards parents, but also towards their relatives and friends *is* an act of great merit. Abdullah ibn Omar relates that our exalted and eternally blessed Prophet has said that:

اِنَّ اَبَرَّ الْبِرِّ اَنْ يَّصِلَ الرَّجُلُ وُدَّ اَبِيْهِ

"One good deed among others is to maintain cordial relations with the relatives of one's father" (Sahih Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Dinar, a pupil of Abdullah ibn Omar says that once the latter was riding a camel to Makkah and there was a she-ass on the leash with him. He rode each alternately. On the way he met a peasant and asked him his and his father's name. When the peasant told him, he gave his she-ass to the peasant and also his turban. Those who were travelling with him asked ibn Omar why he had given so valuable a present to a peasant who could be pleased with an ordinary gift. Abdullah ibn Omar explained that the peasants' father was a friend of his father's and that he (ibn Omar) had heard our eternally blessed Prophet say that "One good deed amongst others *is* to maintain cordial relations with the relatives of one's father"

(Muslim)

Thus one very good way of increasing good deeds in one's record is to maintain cordial relations with the relatives and friends of one's parents and to treat them with respect, courtesy and consideration.

(27) GOOD MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.

Mutual respect, love, understanding, courtesy and a mutual consideration of each other's needs plus mutual tolerance are not only a must for marital and familial bliss but also very meritorious. The exalted and eternally blessed Messenger of Allah has said that:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ إِيْمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخِيَارُكُمْ خِيَارُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ

'The most perfect faith have those Muslims who have better morals, and the best of these arc those who arc best for their women" (Tirmidhi)

A *hadith* has already been quoted which says that the food which one puts in his wife's mouth earns him merit. Another *hadith* goes a bit further and predicts merit even oh the sexual act of husband and wife. Some of the companions once asked the Holy Messenger of Allah, 'We satisfy our carnal needs; does it too carp merit'.'" Our Holy Prophet replied, 'Tell me would it not be a sin if someone did it in the unlawful way" Then the one who is doing it in the lawful way would certainly get its reward". (Muslim)

Another *hadith* tells us that when a husband, upon returning home, looks at his wife love and the wife returns his glance with love Allah looks upon both of them with Mercy.

Husband and wife are always together and pass a large portion of their lives in each other's company, it is but natural for frictions to arise. If these normal misunderstandings and displeasures are allowed to degenerate into bitter quarrels and cruelty to each other, then not only are worldly pleasures destroyed but the Divine reward for mutual love is also lost. Hence Allah and his blessed Messenger have formulated for us a perfect guideline for marital bliss: it can be summarized as follows: "Do not look at only those things which displease you; think too that the partner, who is displeasing you, has some good qualities as

well. If you think of these good qualities, the good relationship with your spouse shall be restored". Allah has said:- فَإِن كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا (النساء)

In a *hadith* the Messenger of Allah, may he be eternally blessed, has directed as follows:

لَا يَفْرَكْ مُؤْمِنٌ مُؤْمِنَةً، إِنْ كَرِهَ مِنْهَا خُلُقًا رَضِيَ مِنْهَا آخَرَ

> *"No believer should have total dislike of a believing woman (because) if he dislikes one thing, there would be some quality (in her) which he would surely like"*

If husband and wife follow this principle and live with mutual love land try their best to be good to each other, their marital life shall be enriched with happiness and they shall go on earning more and more merits and Divine rewards all their lives.

(28) GOOD TREATMENT OF RELATIVES

Good treatment of relatives is very pleasing to Allah and earns much merit. It has also been enjoined by the Holy Qur'an in several places and its merits described, for instance

وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

> *(Al Nisa': 36) Show kindness unto parents and unto near kindred*

وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ تَسَاءَلُوْنَ بِهٖ وَالْاَرْحَامَ

(Al Nisa': 1) Be careful of your duty towards Allah in Whom you claim your rights and towards the womb that bore you

Abu Hurairah relates that our Holy Prophet – may he be eternally blessed — said that

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهٗ -

"He who believes in Allah and in the Day of Judgement, should treat his relations well". (Bukhari and Muslim)

And according to Anas, the Holy Prophet said that

مَنْ اَحَبَّ اَنْ يُبْسَطَ لَهٗ فِيْ رِزْقِهٖ وَيُنْسَاَ لَهٗ فِيْ اَثَرِهٖ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهٗ

"He, who desires his earnings to increase and his life to be long, should treat his relations well".

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Good treatment means courteous behavior, sharing in happiness and grief and helping them in a lawful manner whenever required.

However some points regarding this good treatment must always to kept in mind.

{1} Some people treat their relatives so well that they do not hesitate to sin for them in wrong belief that this *is* what has been enjoined on them. To share in sinning with a relative, to recommend them

undeserving, or to get them an employment for which they are not suited etc. are all unlawful in Islam; good treatment of relatives does not encompass committing sins for them. Hence when a relative seeks helps or support for any unlawful end, a polite excuse is called for.

(2) Good treatment of relatives is meritorious and rewarding only when it is motivated by the desire to earn Divine pleasure and not by any urge to show off or to keep up with others or to follow customs. Our present day society is shackled by customs and traditions; good treatment of relatives is usually motivated by the desire to save face or out of one-up manship; hence many things not really desired or liked are done due to the force of customs. Consequently, one must not allow himself to be motivated by such thoughts and if any good is done to any relative or kinsman it must be done only to earn Allah's pleasure, and with happiness and grace; nothing should be done to complete a formality or fulfil a custom.

(3) Since good treatment of kinsmen should be for the sake of Divine pleasure, one must never expect or wait for a good deed in return. Even when the return is not good, ore should not abandon good treatment of his relations. Actually this is the acid test that shows whether the good treatment is for Allah or merely for show. Our eternally Prophet has said:

لَيْسَ الْوَاصِلُ بِالْمُكَافِئِ، وَلٰكِنَّ الْوَاصِلَ الَّذِي إِذَا قُطِعَتْ رَحِمُهُ وَصَلَهَا.

"He does not treat his relations well who merely returns a good deed; he

who treats them well even when they deny his rights really treats them well".
(Sahih Bukhari)

Umme Kulthum bin Aqabah has related that the eternally blessed Messenger of Allah said:

أَفْضَلُ الصَّدَقَةِ الصَّدَقَةُ عَلَى ذِي الرَّحِمِ الْكَاشِحِ

"The best *sadaqah* is the one given to inimical relatives (*Hakim* and *Tabrani: Al Targheeb wa al Tarheeb*, p.120. volume 4).

Real and true good treatment is the one given even when one's relations treat him badly; this earns much merit. Abu Hurairah relates "Someone said to the Messenger of Allah 'I have some relatives whom I treat well, but they deny me my rights; I treat them well, but they treat me badly. I am forbearing, but they quarrel with me'. The Messenger of Allah said 'If this is really so then you are feeding them hot ashes. Allah shall always give you a helper' *(Sahih Muslim)*.

It means that they were acquiring hell fire by their deeds, and they would never harm him; rather he would be helped against them by Allah.

(29) DOING GOOD TO THE NEIGHBOR

Neighbour's rights are many and are ordained by Allah. Our holy Prophet, may he be eternally blessed, has said: مَا زَالَ جِبْرِيلُ يُوصِينِي بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيُوَرِّثُهُ

"Gabriel advised me so much regarding neighbour's rights that I began to suspect that he would be included among the heirs" (Bukhari and Muslim and Ibn Omar and Ayesha).

Abu Sharih relates that the eternally blessed Holy Prophet said

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ فَلْيُحْسِنْ إِلٰى جَارِهٖ

"He who believes in Allah and in the Day of Judgement should be good to his neighbour" (Sahih Muslim)

Abu Huraira has quoted the Messenger of Allah as follows:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ فَلَا يُؤْذِ جَارَهٗ ۔

"He who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement should not cause pain to his neighbour" (Bukhari and Muslim)

The first and foremost and the principal right of the neighbor is not to cause him pain, trouble or sorrow; moreover, helping him in his need, sending him occasional gifts, sharing his joys and sorrows are all meritorious and rewarding acts. In fact if one's neighbor is poor or in financial straits he should be helped monetarily too. Neighbour is not necessarily one's equal in social or material sense; poor neighbours are also neighbours and they have all the more rights as they are in greater need of help and assistance. If a neighbour is hungry, it is not merely meritorious to feed him but also a bounden duty. Even

a unbeliever neighbour should be treated well. It has been related that Abdullah ibn Omar had a Jew as a neighbour; once when a goat was slaughtered, ibn Omar kept on insisting upon his household to present some meat to the Jew also.

(Abu *Daud and Tirmidhi)*.

(30) CORDIALITY AND COURTESY

Cordial and courteous behavior is very pleasing to Allah and is also rewarding. Abu Dhar Ghifari has related that our eternally blessed Prophet said:

لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ أَنْ تَلْقَى أَخَاكَ بِوَجْهٍ طَلْقٍ

"Never decry any good deed, even though it may be (as ordinary as) meeting your brother cordially. Thus cordial behavior towards others should never be considered lowly as it too adds much good to one's record.

Abu Darda quotes our Prophet - may he be blessed till eternity in the fallowing words:

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَثْقَلُ فِي مِيزَانِ الْعَبْدِ الْمُؤْمِنِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
مِنْ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ وَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُبْغِضُ الْفَاحِشَ الْبَذِيَّ.

"On the day of judgment nothing in the scales (of Divine justice) shall be weightier than a mumin's cordiality and courtesy: Allah very much dislikes one who speaks obscenely"

(Jami Tirmidhi)

Abu Hurairah says that once our Prophet upon

him be eternal peace – was asked "what would admit most men to the Paradise'!" He said "Piety and cordiality"

In another tradition, Abu Hurairah has quoted the following words of our blessed Holy Prophet:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ إِيْمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا

"Off all the men of faith, those are best who have best manners towards others". *(Tirmidhi)*

Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) has quoted the following words of our respected and blessed Prophet: إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيُدْرِكُ بِحُسْنِ خُلُقِهِ دَرَجَةَ الصَّائِمِ الْقَائِمِ

"A man of faith attains by *virtue of his good moral behavior and courtesy and cordiality the status of one who is a keeper of fasts and stands in prayer" (i.e. who fasts as nafl and prays as nafl. (Tirmidhi)*

Jabir relates that our Prophet – upon whom be eternal peace said

إِنَّ مِنْ أَحَبِّكُمْ إِلَيَّ وَأَقْرَبِكُمْ مِنِّي مَجْلِسًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
أَحَاسِنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا

"Those who are dearest to me and who shall be closest to me in the gathering on the Day of Judgement are those who shall be better than others in their moral behavior"

The cordial and courteous behavior mentioned in these Prophetic sayings have a wide range of connotations, but cordiality to others and courtesy are important constiments of moral behaviour and these

merits mentioned above are true of them too.

(31) GOOD BEHAVIOUR TO CO-TRAVELLERS

Just as Allah has ordained many neighborly rights, similarly has he defined many rights of co.-travellers. Co-traveller is the one whom one may not know before hand but in whole company one travels; e.g. the one sitting near in buses, trains, ship and aeroplanes. Such a person has been termed in the Qur'an, i.e. one who is a temporary neighbor. This co-traveller should not be put into any trouble by one's actions; this is his right. Some do not hesitate to put other to much trouble for their own comfort; they should ponder the fact that every journey ends somehow sooner or later, but even in this short period, if one's action cause trouble to the co-travellers a great sin shall be recorded in his name. And since this sin involves human rights it would not pardoned by merely seeking of Divine pardon unless the aggrieved person pardons it. Usually one does not meet one's co-travellers again, nor arc their addresses known so that one may ask them for forgiveness. Once the journey is over, it is almost impossible to beg their forgiveness. Hence one should take great care not to cause any trouble, pain or injury to one's co- travellers.

On the other hand, co-travellers are to be treated with great kindness, consideration, courtesy and cordiality and one should try to give them every possible comfort or at least be cordial to them. This is an act of great merit which can be earned by very

simple means provided one is prepared for it.

(32) MEETING FOR ALLAH

Meeting a Muslim for Allah only is an act of great merit. Meeting for Allah means meeting not for the sake of any mundane gain, but for Allah's pleasure only; for instance one may go to meet a learned man or a sage in order to learn something for self-improvement or one may meet someone to please him believing that giving pleasure to a Muslim pleases Allah. Both these cases are meetings for Allah and, Allah willing, shall earn much merit.

Abu Hurairah has quoted the following words of or Prophet - upon whom be eternal peace:

مَنْ عَادَ مَرِيْضًا أَوْزَارَ أَخًا لَهُ فِي اللهِ نَادَاهُ مُنَادٍ بِأَنْ
طِبْتَ وَطَابَ مَمْشَاكَ وَتَبَوَّأْتَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ مَنْزِلاً،

"One, who visits a sick person or goes to meet his brother for Allah, is called by a (hidden) caller who says to him 'Blessed art Chow, blessed is thine going, thou past made thyself a home in one stage of the Paradise".

(Tirmidhi' Wa-qal: Hasan)

This hadith shows that meeting a Muslim for the sake of merit also increase one's good deeds in the Record. But it should be noted that this order relates only to meeting those whose company does not cause any religious loss; but if it is feared that the meeting would cause one to be involved in a sin or to be adversely affected, or one would be compelled to listen

to tirades against third persons or lose much time in senseless talk, then such meeting must be avoided.

(33) RESPECT TO GUESTS

Showing respect and appropriate hospitality to guests is an important part of our religious behavior and has been much emphasized. Our Blessed Prophet said, according to Abu Hurairah, that

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ

> *"He who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement should treat his guest with respect and courtesy" (Bukhari and Muslim)*

This injunction tells us to greet our guest cordially, to offer him food if it is time for eating. In fact one *hadith* tells us to prepare special food for the guest on the first day provided one can afford it. This has been called jaiza in *hadith (Sahih Bukhari:* from Abi Shuraih)

However, unnecessary and senseless show and pomp and observance of formalities and customs should be avoided. First of all, one should care for the guest's comfort: hence one should not insist upon feeding him if that would cause him pain or trouble. In such a case his comfort and will should be respected.

Guests too should not unnecessarily burden the host and should not overstay; it has been expressly forbidden by a *hadith in Sahih Muslim.*

(34) REMOVING HARMFUL THINGS FROM THE WAY

Removing dirt and filth and other troublesome things like thorns or fruit peels or skins on which someone may slip from the way is a very good deed. Our Prophet upon whom be eternal blessings has been quoted by Abu Hurairah as follows:

الإيمان بضع وسبعون شعبة، فأفضلها قول لا إله إلا الله
وأدناها إماطة الأذى عن الطريق

"Belief has more than seventy divisions of which the highest is the assertion that there is no god but Allah and the lowest is to remove something that causes pain or trouble and filth from the way"

In another *hadith* related by Abu Hurairah, the Messenger of Allah said

وتميط الأذى عن الطريق صدقة

"Removing filth (or pain - giving thing) from the way is a sadaqah (i.e. it earn mere like sadaqah)".

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) quoted the Holy Prophet - may he be ever in peace - as follows إنه خلق كل إنسان من بني آدم على ستين وثلاثمائة مفصل، فمن كبر الله
وحمد الله وهلل وسبح الله

وَاسْتَغْفَرَ اللّٰهَ وَعَزَلَ حَجَرًا عَنْ طَرِيْقِ النَّاسِ اَوْ شَوْكَةً
اَوْ عَظْمًا عَنْ طَرِيْقِ النَّاسِ اَوْ اَمَرَ بِمَعْرُوْفٍ اَوْ نَهٰى عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ
عَدَدَ السِّتِّيْنَ وَالثَّلٰثِمِائَةِ، فَاِنَّهٗ يَمْشِيْ يَوْمَئِذٍ
وَقَدْ زَحْزَحَ نَفْسَهٗ عَنِ النَّارِ

"Everyone of the human race has three hundred and sixty joints. So anyone who speaks greatness of Allah, praises Allah and says 'There is no god but Allah' and "Subhan Allah" and seeks forgiveness of Allah and removes a stone or thorn or a bone from the path of people, orders a good deed or forbids (others) from a bad one and reaches the three hundred and sixty mark, he shall verily remove himself away from the chastisement of hell".

According to another *hadith*, our Holy Prophet said that once a man saw a thorny branch on his path and removed it in order to save others from pain (due to being pricked by it) and Allah was pleased by his this deed and pardoned him. In another *hadith*, it is related that our Holy Prophet said, that he saw the man walking about in the Paradise.

These *ahadith* show how important it is in Islam to keep the roads and paths clear. Even removal of a thorny branch, which is a very minor act, has been promised so much reward and merit. When so much emphasis has been laid on removing things of pain from the path, it can be imagined how great a sin it would be to make a path dirty and give trouble to passers by. Causing trouble to passers by also includes parking one's vehicle (car, motor cycle etc.) in such a

way or place as to block others' path or to make it difficult for them and it is a sin. Similarly driving in a way which is in any way troublesome for others is also a sin.

Traffic rules have been formulated and promulgated to organize traffic on the roads; their observance is not merely legally compulsory but also a religious duty. If one observes these rules and laws in order to promote discipline in the society and public welfare, then these acts shall be rewarded. And if these rules are not observed then the sin shall be twice as great: for causing trouble to the people and again for disrupting discipline and breaking laws.

It is indeed a matter of regret that today such bad acts are no longer considered sinful and even educated persons commit these sins thoughtlessly. May Allah grant us the right understanding of our religion and the opportunity to act according to it.

(35) AVOIDANCE OF QUARREL

Quarrel is very much disliked by Allah and a quarrelsome person has been decried in Qur'an; in contrast, forbearance, equanimity and avoidance of quarrel arc attributes pleasing to Allah anti he who has them is rewarded for them. Abdullah ibn Abbas has related that addressing a man of Abd-al-Qais tribe, our blessed Holy Prophet said: إِنَّ فِيكَ خَصْلَتَيْنِ

يُحِبُّهُمَا اللهُ: الْحِلْمُ وَالْأَنَاةُ

"You have two traits that Allah likes forbearance and dignity"

(Sahih Muslim)

So if someone be in the right and yet does he relinquish his right solely in order to avoid strife and quarrel or make peace, such a man has been given glad tidings by our Prophet may he be eternally blessed, who has been quoted as follows by Abu Umamah:

أَنَا زَعِيمٌ بِبَيْتٍ فِي رَبَضِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ
كَانَ مُحِقًّا

"I guarantee a home on the verges of Paradise him who gives up quarrel even though he may be in the right" (Sunan Abu Da'ud)

How fortunate a man who has been given glad tiding and even guaranteed a home in the Paradise! May Allah grant such an opportunity to all Muslims, amin!

(36) TO LEARN MATTERS OF FAITH

It is the duty of every Muslim to know as much about his Faith as to enable him to lead his life according to it, it is not necessary for everyone to become a theologian, only necessary learning is necessary; e.g. important points about prayers, *hajj* and *zakat* (poor-due) and what is allowed and what is forbidden in matters of everyday life

While acquisition of knowledge is a duty, observance of religious duties in the light of this knowledge has obviously been promised much reward and merit. Every act of learning Faith is a good deed in itself and hay been much lauded in Qur'an anti also *hadith*. For instance, according to Abu Darda', our eternally blessed Prophet said that:

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَبْتَغِي فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللهُ لَهُ
طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا
لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ رِضًا بِمَا صَنَعَ

"For the one who walks a path in order to acquire some knowledge. Allah makes the path to Paradise easy; and angels being pleased with this deed of *the seeker after knowledge, spread their wings in his path".*

(Abu Daud; Tirmidhi)

This encompasses not only those seekers of knowledge who study religion in a regular way but also those who seek answers to their problems by going to a learned person or by sitting in a sermon. Anas has quoted the following words of the Holy Prophet:

مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ حَتَّى
يَرْجِعَ

"He who goes out of his home to seek knowledge is in the way of Allah till he returns. *(Jami-Tirmidhi)*

Thus whatever step one takes to learn any aspect

of the faith of Islam would, Allah willing, earn him the merit and reward due to a seeker of knowledge: even study of religious books, provided they arc genuine, earns for one the same merit and reward. Hence one should choose one's books in consultation with a learned man. One should never pass up an opportunity to learn anything of the faith. It will increase knowledge, improve one's life and increases the good in one's record. Knowledge is an unbounded ocean and the more one learns the more becomes his thirst for knowledge, and it should be so. *Hadith* tells us that one who is greedy for knowledge is never satiated. He is ever seeking more knowledge and thus the acquisition of merit goes on *and* on.

(37) TEACHING RELIGION

Teaching religion is for more meritorious an act than learning religion, provided one does not expound religious to show off his own erudition but teaches to benefit others. Abu Umamah has quoted the following words of our Prophet - may he be eternally blessed:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلَآئِكَتَهُ وَأَهْلَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ حَتَّى النَّمْلَةَ
فِيْ جُحْرِهَا، وَحَتَّى الْحُوْتَ لَيُصَلُّوْنَ عَلٰى مُعَلِّمِي النَّاسِ الْخَيْرَ

Allah the Most High and His angels and all creatures of the Heavens and earth even the ants inside their ant-holes shower mercy on those who teach things of benefit to other. (Jame Tirmidhi)

Sahl bin Sa'd relates that once our Prophet upon

whom be peace, addressed Ali as follows:

لان يهدي الله بك رجلا واحدا خير لك من حمر النعم

> *"If Allah gives guidance to even one person through you it is far better for you than red camels (Bukhari and Muslim).*

Red camels were highly prized among the Arabs. Thus this *hadith* means that if your teaching benefit someone it is better than all wealth in the world.

Hence whenever one gets a chance to teach others, particularly one's own wife and children, any aspect of religion, one should avail it and continue doing this good deed because it is a perpetual source of merit.

(38) RESPECT FOR ELDERS

Although piety and knowledge are the true attributes of greatness in Islam, the youngsters have been enjoined to give due respect to their elder. Our Prophet — upon whom be peace — went to the extent of saying that ليس منا من لم يرحم صغيرنا ويعرف شرف كبيرنا

> *"He is not of us who does not have kindness for our young and respect for our old"* *(Abu Daud and Tirmidhi)*

Grey-haired folk have been specially indicated as objects if our respect in *hadith*. Abu Musa Ashari relates that our Prophet — may he be eternally blessed — said: ان من اجلال الله تعالى اكرام ذي الشيبة المسلم

"Respect for a grey-haired Muslim is a part of respect for Allah" (Abu Daud)

Another Prophetic saying has been related by Anas:

مَا أَكْرَمَ شَابٌّ شَيْخًا لِسِنِّهِ إِلَّا قَيَّضَ اللّٰهُ لَهُ مَنْ يُكْرِمُهُ عِنْدَ سِنِّهِ

> *"For youth who respects an old man because of his age. Allah appoints people who shall respect the young man in his old age.*

It was a custom of our eternally blessed Prophet that if a younger member of a delegation began to speak, the holy Prophet asked him to let the elders speak first. This shows the great emphasis, laid by our blessed Prophet *upon* respect for elders which is highly merited and rewarded.

(39) RESPECT FOR ISLAMIC WAYS AND CUSTOMS

All those things which symbolize Islam and Muslim, e.g. Qur'an, Kaaba, Mosque, holy places, prayers, *adhem*, etc. should be respected, this too is an act *of* high merit, as the Qur'an says: وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللّٰهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

(40) KINDNESS TO CHILDREN

Kindness to children is a Prophetic *sunnah*, as mentioned earlier: our Prophet said that he was not one of us who did not have kindness for the younger ones.

Hadith quotes our eternally Prophet's words as follows: when I hear a child crying while I am leading the prayer I shorten them so that the child's mother may not be agitated by the child's crying.

Our Prophet took children in his arms, kissed them and talked to them in a light vein. All these acts are *sunnah* and to do them with the intent of following the *sunnah* is meritorious and recoending.

(41) ADHAN: CALLING TO PRAYER

Calling to prayer, i.e. *adhan is* a custom of Islam and Prophetic sayings attribute many merits to the act. According to a *hadith* quoted by both Bukhari and Muslim, our Holy Prophet —- upon whom be peace — has said that if people knew the real reward and merit of calling to prayer, everyone would try to give the call and lots would have to be drawn.

Nowadays *maezzins* are appointed in mosques to give the call to prayer, but if one prays at a place other than mosque where the sound of the call has not reached, he should observe *sunnah* by giving the call and earn the merit thereof.

Abu Saeed Khudri once said to Abdullah the son of Abdur Rahman ibn Sa'sa'a "I see that you are very fond of goats and the desert. Henceforth whenever you are among your goats or in the desert and give the call to prayer, call loudly because whosoever shall hear the call, jinns or men or other things, would bear evidence for the giver of the call on the day of Judgement. Having said this, Abu Saeed Khidri added that the had heard it from the Messenger of Allah, upon whom be eternal blessings.

This shows the merits of giving the call the prayer.

(42) RESPONDING TO ADHAN

To show respect for adhan, one should keep as quiet as possible while the call is being given; and it has been emphasized by our Holy and blessed Prophet that each word of adhan should be responded to, i.e. the hearer should repeat each word that the giver of the call utters. However, when حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلٰوةِ، حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ and are said, the responder should say وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيْمِ And in the fajr prayer when the giver of the call says اَلصَّلٰوةُ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ النَّوْمِ one should respond with صَدَقْتَ وَ بَرَرْتَ Abdullah ibn Omar has relates that our blessed Prophet said as follow: "When you hear azan, repeat the words after the muazzin then send darud unto me because on him who sends one darud unto me Allah sends ten mercies. Then pray for "Vaseela" for me because that is a stage of the

Paradise which is reserved for only one of Allah's bond men and I hope it will be me who shall get it. Thus he who prays for Vaseela for me shall have right to my interceasing for Divine pardon." (Sahih Muslim)

It is because of this that our blessed Prophet has taught us a prayer which includes prayer for Vaseela: اللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ هٰذِهِ الدَّعْوَةِ التَّامَّةِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ الْقَائِمَةِ آتِ مُحَمَّدَنِ الْوَسِيْلَةَ وَالْفَضِيْلَةَ وَابْعَثْهُ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُوْدَا نِ الَّذِيْ وَعَدْتَّهٗ اِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيْعَادَ۔

Jabir relates that our blessed Prophet has said that whosoever recited this prayer after adhan would be assured of our Prophet's intercession on the day of Judgement *(Bukhari)*

Moreover, reciting the following words after adhan is also recommended by *hadith*

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَاَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ رَضِيْتُ بِاللّٰهِ رَبًّا وَّبِمُحَمَّدٍ رَّسُوْلًا وَّبِالْاِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا

Saad ibn Waqqas has quoted our blessed Prophet as saying that he who utters the above words after *adhan* is pardoned (Sahih Muslim).

Responding to *adhan* and then reciting the above prayers does not take much time; one has only to remember and get into the habit to earn much merit and reward. Unless there is a genuine reason, one must observe these instructions.

In this connection it should be noted that if one hears *adhans* from several mosques one after the other, he should recite the recommended prayers after the first *adhan* only; this completes the observance of *sunnah*.

(43) READING THE QURAN

Qur'an is Allah's greatest gift to the entire mankind. It must be read, understood and acted upon, but mere reading and reciting of Qur'an have also been designated by Allah as acts of merit that deserve rewards. Mere recital of the words of the Qur'an is enough to invoke Allah's mercy, but many think, foolishly or unknowingly that reading of Qur'an without understanding what it says is of no use. They think the Divine book is like a other books written by men which have to be understood. But Qur'an, a Divine Book, is different; it guarantees well-being and success in this life as well as the afterlife and mere reading or reciting it is in itself rewarding and meritorious.

Abdullah ibn Uas'ud relates that our blessed Prophet has said

مَنْ قَرَأَ حَرْفًا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللهِ فَلَهُ حَسَنَةٌ، وَالْحَسَنَةُ
بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا، لَا أَقُولُ الٓمٓ حَرْفٌ، وَلَكِنْ: أَلِفٌ حَرْفٌ، وَلَامٌ حَرْفٌ،
وَمِيمٌ حَرْفٌ

"He who reads one word of Allah's book gets one merit which is in fact equal to ten merits. I do not say that is one word, is one word, is one word and is one word".

(Tirmidhi)

This shows that if anyone recites only, it is enough for thirty merits to be recorded. It also proves that mere reading or recital without understanding is also rewarding since is a word the meanings of

which are unknown and so it is impossible to understand it. Thus our blessed Prophet, by giving this examples proved that reward for reading or reciting Qur'an does not depend upon understanding it, but mere reading or recital is rewarding in itself.

Hence every Muslim, before busying himself with other work, must read sonic portion - one para or half or one quarter or even one *ruku'* of the Qur'an without fail; this shall assuredly earn him ever increasing merit every day.

Moreover, every Muslim must commit to memory some *surahs* for ready recital without having to open the book. According to Ibn Abbas, our blessed Prophet has said

> *"He whose mind does not have some portion of Qur'an is like an empty house".*

(44) READING AND RECITAL OF *SURAH FATEHA* AND *SURA IKHLAS*

Although reading or reciting any part of Qur'an is an act of merit, but reading or reciting of certain *surahs* have been indicated by our blessed Prophet as particularly meritorious and rewarding. Among the short *surahs*. Surah ikhlas has been indicated as much rewarding; indeed, it has been said in some

hadiths to be equivalent to one-third Qur'an.

Abu Hurairah has related that once our revered and blessed Prophet said to the companions "Come together, I shall recite one-third Qur'an before you". Some companions collected and the Holy Prophet came out of his house and recited and went back. Shortly he came out and said. "I had said that I shall recite one-third Qur'an before you. Remember, this is equal to one-third Qur'an"

(*Muslim* and *Tirmidhi*).

Abu Darda' has related that once, addressing the companions, our eternally blessed Prophet asked "Can anyone of you not recite one-third Qur'an in one night?" She Companions sail "How can anyone recite one-third Qur'an in one night?" The Holy Prophet said "Recite قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ it is equal to one-third Qur'an" (*Sahih Muslim*).

This why *Surah Ikhlas* is recited three times to bless the dead.

(45) CAREFUL ABLUTION *(WADHU)*

Ablution or *wadhu* with full observance of its rules according to *sunnah is* a sublime act for which *hadith* has promised many merits and rewards. Uthman ibn Affan relates that our eternally blessed Prophet has said:

مَنْ تَوَضَّأَ فَأَحْسَنَ الْوُضُوءَ خَرَجَتْ خَطَايَاهُ مِنْ جَسَدِهِ

حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَظْفَارِهِ.

"One who performs ablution and does well expunges sins from his body even under his nails"

Another hadith relates that once our Prophet, upon whom be showered Divine Blessings eternally, said to the Companions, "Do I tell you the things due to which Allah the Most High eradicates (your) sins and elevates (you)?" The Companion said "O Messenger of Allah'. Do tell us". The Holy Prophet, be he blessed, said "To perform complete ablution in spite of not wanting it, to take many steps to the mosque, and to wait for next prayers after one prayer, this act is as sublime as *jihad*." (*Muslim and Tirmidhi*)

This means that even when one does not feel like performing ablution due to, say, cold weather etc. its performing is as meritorious and rewarding as guarding the frontier in *jihad*. Correct ablution means ablution as prescribed in the *sunnah*. Hence one must follow and observe the prescribed method of ablution and if one does not know it, he must learn it.

(46) MISVAK

The eternally blessed Messenger of Allah has highly contended the use of *miswak* (to clean the teeth). Ayesha – may Allah be pleased with her – has related that the blessed Messenger of Allah has said:

اَلسِّوَاكُ مُطَهِّرَةٌ لِلْفَمِ، مَرْضَاةٌ لِلرَّبِّ

"Miswak is a means of cleaning the mouth and of earning Divine Pleasure" (Sunan Nasai)

فَضْلُ الصَّلَاةِ بِالسِّوَاكِ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ بِغَيْرِ سِوَاكٍ سَبْعُوْنَ ضِعْفًا

Praying (with the) use of miswak is seventy times superior to praying without miswak *(Al-Targhib p.131 v.1 with ref. Hakim Alam)*

Use of *miswak* has been lauded in countless ahadith and it is among the favorite *sunnahs* of the blessed Messenger of Allah. It has advantage in this life and in the after-life too! It is a simple and easy task which can acid to our merits.

(47) DHIKR AFTER ABLUTION *(WADHU)*

Omar relates that our Prophet - upon whom be eternal peace - said that for one who, after careful and correct ablution, recites:

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَاَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ

all eight doors of the Heaven are opened so that he may enter by whichever door he wants.
(Sahih Muslim)

The tradition according to Abu Daud also adds that one should look up towards the sky when

saying these words and according to Tirmidhi one should also add

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِنَ التَّوَّابِيْنَ وَاجْعَلْنِيْ مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِيْنَ

to the above words.

(48) TAHIYYAT-AL-WADHU

Wadhu or ablution may be performed for any purpose, and praying two *rak'ats* after every wadhu as *tahiyyat-al wazu is* a highly meritorious act. Ayaba ibn Amir has related that the blessed Prophet said "When one performs ablution and performs it well and then prays two rak'ats in such a way that his face and also his heart are turned to Allah. Paradise becomes a certainly for him"

(Muslim. Abu Da'ud. Nasai)

Abu Hurairah has related that the eternally blessed Messenger of Allah said to Bilal, 'Tell me from which of your acts you expect most merit, because during Meraj (Assertion) I heard your footsteps in front of me". Bilal submitted 'The act due to which I expect maximum mercy from Allah is that whenever during day or night. I have performed ablution, I have prayed as much as I could". (*Bukhari and Muslim*)

It takes two or three minutes in praying two *rak'ats* after *Wadhu*, but it is immensely rewarding. So one should do it. If it is time of (one of the five compulsory) prayers, then it is better to pray two *rak'ats tahiyyat-al Wadhu* first, but if there is no time for it then *fard* or *sunnah* should be performed with

[additional] intent of *tahiyyat-al-wadhu.* This might care the merit due to *tahi yyat-al-Wadhu.*

(49) TAHIYYAT-AL-MASJID

Praying two rakats with the intent of tahiyyat-al-*masjid* immediately upon entering a mosque is indicated in *hadith*, as our blessed Messenger of Allah said "When anyone of you comes into a mosque, he should pray two *rak'ats*" *(Tirmidhi)*

Although *tahiyyat-u l-masjid* should be prayed separately, but if the tune for *fard* or *sunnah* has come, then the *niyyat* for *tahiyyat al-masjid* should be added to *fardh* or *sunnah* as the case may be. If is hoped that thus one would be able to get the merit of *tahiyyat al-masjid.*

The correct way to pray *tahiyyat-al-masjid* is to perform it upon entering the mosque before sitting down. But if one sit down first for some reason, then too he can pray *tahiyyat-al-masjid*.

However, if the time is really too short to perform *tahiyyat-al-masjid* then one should at least recite the following:

سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَلَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ أَكْبَرُ

وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

This *Kalima* should be recited as long as one is sitting in the mosque, as this has been equated in *hadith* to partaking of the fruits of paradise.

(50) INTENT OF *I'TEKAF*

Whenever one enters a mosque either to pray or for any other purposes one should have the intent of observing *Itekaf* as long as he would remain in the mosque. This shall earn him the merit and reward of *Itekaf*

(51) PRAYING IN FIRST ROW

Congregational prayer is twenty seven times superior to praying alone, and in congregational prayer, praying in the first row is of such a great merit that our blessed Prophet has said

لَوْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ مَا فِي الصَّفِّ الْمُقَدَّمِ لَكَانَتْ قُرْعَةٌ

"If you know how superior is the first row lots would have to be drawn."

(Sahih Muslim).

Abu Umamah has relates that the blessed Messenger of Allah has said "Allah and His angles shower mercies on the first row"

(Musnad-e-Ahmed).

'Arabd bin Sariyah has related that our eternally blessed Prophet sought Divine pardon thrice for the first row and only once for the second row. *(Nasai and Ibn Majah)*

Hence one should try to be in the first row in every congregational prayer, or at least whenever

there is a chance. But, it is not permitted to force one's way into the first row in such a way as to cause trouble to others. Abbas has quoted the following Prophetic words:

مَنْ تَرَكَ الصَّفَّ الأَوَّلَ مَخَافَةَ أَنْ يُؤْذِيَ أَحَدًا أَضْعَفَ اللّٰهُ لَهُ أَجْرَ الصَّفِّ الأَوَّلِ .

He who leaves the first row for liar of causing trouble to others is given trice the merit of the first row by Allah (al Targhib, p.285. vol. I, ref. Tabrani *wa fi asnadihi dhu'f).*

(52) FILLING THE GAP IN PRAYER ROW.

Keeping the rows in congregational prayer straight and filling of gaps therein have been highly emphasized and described acts of great merit. Abdullah ibn Omar has related that our blessed Prophet has said:

مَنْ وَصَلَ صَفًّا وَصَلَهُ اللّٰهُ

He who joins a row (i.e. fill tis gap) is rewarded by Allah with His closeness (Nasai)

Abu Jahifah relates that our eternally blessed Prophet said that he who fills the gap in a prayer row is pardoned by Allah *(Targhib* ref. *Bazzar).* In general it is more meritorious to stand on the right

of the *imam* but if there are more people on the right than on the left, standing on the left is according to *ahadith* twice as meritorious.

(See *Al Targhib li al Mundhiri, p. 221/,* vol.I cit. ibn Hazim).

(53) ISHRAQ PRAYER

Isharay is a nafl prayer which is performed a bit after the sunrise when the sun is somewhat high, that is, usually twelve minutes after sunrise. It has only two *rak'ats* but *ahadith* are replete with the high merits of this prayer. Abu Hurairah relates that our Prophet - upon whom be eternal Peace - has said that "He who says Ishraq prayers without fail shall have his lesser sins forgiven even though they may be as numerous as foam specks on the surface of the sea" (*Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah*)

Abu Hurairah has also related that the eternally blessed Prophet once sent some companions on jihad. They returned soon and with much booty. Someone expressed his surprise and said that he had never seen a military expedition return so soon and with so much booty. The Holy Prophet said "Should I not tell you about the men who would come back even sooner and with still more booty'?" then he said "He who performs his ablution moll, then completes his fajr prayer and then (after sunrise) performs his *ishraq* prayer, come, sooner and with greater booty"

(*Targhib p.427. vol I* ref. Abu Yate ba Isnad-e-Sahib).

We have already cited the tradition related by Abu Dhar Ghifari that tells us that man has three hundred and sixty joints in his body and to rid each of them from hell-fire, he should do at least three hundred and sixty good deeds, which were subsequently described by our Holy Prophet. He said that saying *Subhan Allah* once in one good deed, saying *al Hamdu Lillah is* another and saying *La Ilaha Illallah* is the third: to bid someone do good is a good deed and to stop someone from sin is also a good deed. Then after reciting the whole list, our Prophet said:

وَيُجْزِئُ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ رَكْعَتَانِ يَرْكَعُهُمَا مِنَ الضُّحٰى

"And in place of all these good deeds, two rakats prayed at the time of ishraq can also suffice (*Sahih* Muslim)

This clearly means that these two rak'ats are equivalent to three hundred and sixty good deeds. The best way of performing *Ishraq* prayers is to sit in place after fajr prayers and do *dhikr* and then leave after saying *ishraq* prayers when the sum has risen. But if one cannot follow this, then he can say *ishraq* prayers after coming back home or after doing something he has to do.

(54) BATHING AND USE OF PERFUME ON FRIDAY

Bathing on Friday has been highly commended in ahadith. One should have the intent of bathing on Friday while taking his bath. Wearing a perfume is a

sunnah and following it is mentorious and rewarding. Abu Ayyub Ansari has related that our blessed Prophet has said that:

من اغتسل يوم الجمعة ومس من طيب إن كان عنده
ولبس احسن ثيابه، ثم خرج حتى ياتي المسجد فيركع
ما بدا له ولم يؤذ احدا، ثم انصت حتى يصلي كان
كفارة لما بينها وبين الجمعة الاخرى

> *"If one bathes on Friday and puts on perfume if he has it and wears good clothes, then goes out of the house and into the mosque, then says as many rakats as he can, but causes no trouble to anyone and keeps silence till the prayer is over, this act of his atones for all lesser sins from this Friday to the next"*
>
> *(Targhib ref. Musnad-e-Ahmad)*

Abu Umamah has related that our Prophet - upon whom be eternal peace - said "Bathing on Friday pulls out sin from the roots of hair". (*Tibrani*)

After bathing on Friday and putting on perfume, one should hurry as soon as possible to the mosque. A hadith says that on Fridays angels stand on the portals of mosque and record the names of those who conic early. The first arrivals earn merit equivalent to the sacrifice of a camel, the next equivalent to the sacrifice of a cow, the third equivalent to that of a raim; those who come fourth earn merit equivalent to the *sadaqah* of a fowl and the last ones earn merit

equivalent to the sadaqah of an egg. But when the *imam* comes for the *khutba*, the angels close their register *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

(55) EATING SEHRI IN FAST

Fasting, whether in Ramadhan or as *nafl* is a great act of worship and eating *sehri is* an act of merit. Anas says that our eternally blessed Prophet said "Have *sehri* because it brings abundance" *(Bukhari)*

Abdullah bin Umar has related that our revered and blessed Prophet said:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّوْنَ عَلَى الْمُتَسَحِّرِيْنَ

"Verily Allah and His angels shower mercy on those who have sehri" (Targhib ref. Ibn Hibbn and Tabrani)

Abu Sa'eed Khudri relates that our blessed Prophet has said:

اَلسَّحُوْرُ كُلُّهُ بَرَكَةٌ فَلَا تَدَعُوْهُ، وَلَوْ اَنْ يَّجْرَعَ اَحَدُكُمْ
جُرْعَةً مِّنْ مَاءٍ، فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّوْنَ
عَلَى الْمُتَسَحِّرِيْنَ

"Sehri is (a source of) abundance, so do not leave it even if you take first one mouthful of water, because Allah and His angels shower mercy on sehri-eaters" (ibid ref. Musuad-e-Ahmad and Isnadahu Qavi).

It is better to have sehri in the last part of the night.

(56) TO HURRY IN *IFTAR*

While fasting, one should hurry with iftar after one is sure that the sun has set. Delaying Iftar without any legitimate cause isn't allowed. Sahl ibn Saad has related that our blessed Prophet has said 'People shall be in welfare as long as they hurry in iftar (breaking fast) (*Bukhari and Muslim*)

Abu Hurairah has said that our blessed Prophet has said that "Those of His bondsmen are dear to Allah who hurry with iftar (breaking fast)".
(*Musnade-Ahmad and Tirmidhi*).

(57) GIVING *IFTAR* TO A FASTING MAN

Giving Iftar to a fasting man is an act of great merit. Zaib ibn Khalik Jehmi has related that our Prophet - upon whom be peace - has said:-

مَنْ فَطَّرَ صَائِمًا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِهِ غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ
لَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أَجْرِ الصَّائِمِ شَيْءٌ

"He who gives iftar to another fasting person shall earn reward equivalent to a fasting man without detracting from the reward of the latter".
(Nasai and Tirmidhi)

Salman Farsi has related that our eternally blessed Prophet has said that, "if one breaks the fast

of another, this act shall be a source of pardon of his sins and release of his neck from hell-fire, and he shall earn the merit of the fast of the fasting man, but the reward of the fasting man shall not be reduced". The companion, upon hearing this submitted:

"Some of us do not have enough to break the fast of another". Thereupon our Prophet said "Allah shall give this reward even to those who give a date or water or a mouthful of milk to a fasting man".

(Sahih ibn Khuzaimah)

(58) LOOKING AFTER THE HOUSEHOLD OF A HAJI OR MUJAHID

Haj and *jihad* both are very sublime acts of worship, but for those who are unable to perform them, Allah has created means whereby they can participate in the merits of these acts. Anyone who helps a man prepare for *jihad* or for *haj*, earns, by the grace of Allah, a part of the merit of these acts of worship. Similarly looking after the household of a *haji* or a *mujahid* and to fulfil their needs also makes a person participant in *haj or jihad* as the case may be. Zaid bin Khalid has related our eternally blessed Prophet has said : مَنْ جَهَّزَ غَازِيًا، أَوْ جَهَّزَ حَاجًّا، أَوْ خَلَفَهُ فِي أَهْلِهِ، أَوْ فَطَّرَ صَائِمًا، كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أُجُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْئًا،

"He who readies a mujahid (for jihad) or a haji (for haj) (i.e. helps in providing the means) or looks after his household in his absence or gives iftar to a fasting man, earns merit equivalent to that earned by the man he has helped without the merit of the latter being lessened". (Sunan Nasai)

(59) PRAYING FOR MARTYRDOM

Martyrdom in the way of Allah is a sublime act, and just as martyrdom has immense rewards and merits, praying for it too earns the same merit and reward. Sahl bin Hanif has related that our blessed Prophet has said:

مَنْ سَأَلَ اللّٰهَ الشَّهَادَةَ بِصِدْقٍ بَلَّغَهُ اللّٰهُ مَنَازِلَ
الشُّهَدَاءِ، وَإِنْ مَاتَ عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ

He who prays to Allah for martyrdom with a true heart, is granted the rank of a martyr even though he dies on his bed (Sahih Muslim)

Anas has related that our blessed Prophet has said: مَنْ طَلَبَ الشَّهَادَةَ صَادِقًا أُعْطِيَهَا، وَلَوْ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ

He who sincerely craves martyrdom is granted martyrdom even though he may not apparently attain it.

(Sahih Muslim).

(60) STARTING WORK EARLY IN THE MORNING

Staring work early in the morning has been highly lauded in the hadith corpus.

Our eternally blessed Prophet has said:

اللهم بارك لأمتي في بكورها

"O Allah! Grant abundance to my ummah in its works of early morning".

The blessed Prophet has also prohibited sleeping just after *fajr* prayers prior to sunrise and has called it a source of poverty. (Ibn Maja). Once, upon seeing Fatimah - may Allah be pleased with her - sleeping just after fajr, he woke her up and told her never to sleep at that time

(Targhib, p.191, vol.i, ref. *Baihaqi)*

(61) *DHIKR OF* ALLAH DURING BUSINESS

Dhikr of Allah at intervals while engaged in business is a source of great reward and merit. It is mentioned in *hadith* that in a place where people are oblivious of *dhikr*, remembrance of Allah is like being steadfast in jihad when others are running away. *(Targhib, p.193, vol. 3, ref. Bazzar & Tabrani)*.

Abu Qalaba, one of the famous followers (tabi'in) say that once two men met in the market

and one said "Come let us seek Allah's pardon when others are forgetful of Allah". The second man did it. Then one of them died and the other saw him in a dream saying, "Allah had pardoned us on the very same evening we lead met in the market".

Certain *adhkar* have been specially recommended in *hadith*. Omar (may Allah be pleased with him) has quoted the following words of our blessed Prophet:

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ
الْحَمْدُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ حَيٌّ لَا يَمُوتُ بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ
وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Our Prophet - upon whom be peace - has said that whosoever recites these words upon entering the market is granted a thousand merits by Allah and Allah pardons his thousand (minor) sins and elevates him by a thousand stages (*Tirmidhi*)

These words should be committed memory and recited off and on during work.

(62) TAKING BACK SOLD GOODS

Sometimes a buyer wishes to return a thing he has bought. In such a case the seller is not bound to take it back, but if he does it in view of the buyer's need or his embarrassment, it would be an act of very high merit. Abu Hurairah has quoted the following Prophetic words:

مَنْ أَقَالَ مُسْلِمًا بَيْعَتَهُ أَقَالَهُ اللّٰهُ عَثْرَتَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

He who takes back a thing sold has his sins pardoned on the Day of Judgement *(Abu Daud)*

(63) GIVING LOAN TO THE NEEDY

Giving loan to a needy man *is* an act of great merit. Abdullah ibn Masud has quoted the Prophetic words "Every loan is a *sadaqah*". *(Baihaqi and Tabrani)*

Some *ahadith* tell us that the merit of giving loans needy man is more than that of a *sadagah*.
(Targhib. Tabrani and *Baihaqi).*

This is probably because a loan is usually of amount which is not intended as *sadagah*, and is given to needy person, who does not beg, and so its merit and reward are correspondingly higher.

(64) GIVING GRACE PERIOD TO POOR DEBTOR

In both Qur'an and hadith, much merit has been promised to those who give time to poor debtors. The Qur'an says:-

وَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ

Abu Hurairah has quoted the following saying

of the Holy Prophet - upon whom be peace:

مَنْ أَنْظَرَ مُعْسِرًا أَوْ وَضَعَ لَهُ أَظَلَّهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
تَحْتَ ظِلِّ عَرْشِهِ يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ.

He who gives time to a poor man or reduces his debt would be placed by Allah in the shade of *His Throne on the day* when *there shall be no shade.*
(Tirmidhi, Wa-qal. Hasan Sahih)

Hadhifah has related that the Holy Prophet has said, 'The soul of a man from among the earlier ummahs was taken by, the Angel (of death). He was asked if he had ever done a good deed. He replied that he had been giving loans and had mistreated his agents to give time to poor (debtors) and to treat kindly the well-to-to. Thereupon Allah the Most High ordered the Angels, 'You too should treat him kindly'. And thus was he pardoned.

(65) TELLING THE TRUTH IN TRADE

Trading is a mundane activity, but if it is done with a view to obtain lawful and honest living and to fulfil the lawful needs of oneself and one's own family, trading because a source of reward and merit, provided one avoids unlawful activities. Honesty and truth in trading has been much lauded in *hadith*. Abu Said Khudri has quoted the following Prophetic tradition:

التاجر الصدوق الأمين مع النبيين والصديقين والشهداء يوم القيامة

A trader who is truthful and honest shall be in the company of *Prophets, Siddiqun and Shuhada'* *(Tirmidhi).*

(66) PLANTING TREES

Planting plants and trees in appropriate places is an act of great merit. Anas has quoted the following Prophetic saying:

ما من مسلم يغرس غرسا أو يزرع زرعا فيأكل منه
طير أو إنسان إلا كان له به صدقة۔

A man plants a tree or sows a field and a man or bird eats from it, the tree or field becomes a source of sadaqah for him. *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

In other words the merit of advantage taken by a man of beast from a plantation goes continuously to the planter as a *sadaqah jariyah.*

(67) GOOD TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

Islam has ordained rights of animals just as there are rights of men. It is prohibited to unnecessary cause pain to harmless animals. Even the animals to be slaughtered are to be slaughtered in such a way that their suffering is maximum. Our blessed Prophet has

ordered that knife should be properly sharpened before slaughter and every care possible should be taken of the animal to be slaughtered. (*Tirmidhi*).

Having mercy on animals, rearing them and giving them comfort is very pleasing to Allah and is very meritorious and rewarding.

Our Prophet - upon whom be peace - once related a story of man of earlier *ummahs:* He felt great thirst during a journey. After a great search, he found a well which lacked a bucket to draw up the water. He went down into the well and slaked his thirst and came out of the well, then he saw a thirty dog licking wet earth. The man felt great pity and felt for the dog's suffering. lie took off his leather socks and, climbing down into the well, he felt them with water and climbed out with socks held in his teeth. Allah was so pleased with this act that tic pardoned him. (*Bukhari and Muslim*).

(68) KILLING HARMFUL ANIMALS

Killing harmful animals which cause pain or loss to men i in act of merit that carps reward, e.g. killing of snakes and scorpions has been promised rewards. Once Abdullah ibn Masud was preaching when he saw a snake crawling on a wall; he interrupted his sermon and killed to snake with a stick; then he said that he had heard the following saying from the Holy Prophet - may he be eternally blessed: مَنْ قَتَلَ حَيَّةً أَوْ عَقْرَبًا فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ مُشْرِكًا حَلَّ دَمُهُ

One who kills a snake or scorpion acts as if he has killed a mushrik whose killing is lawful

(Targhib, -p.403 , vol. 4, ref Bazzar)

The Holy Prophet has ordered of lizards. Abu Hurairah has related that the Holy Prophet - may he be blessed eternally - has said that he who kills a lizard with one blow would earn so much merit and who kills it with second blow would earn so much (here the Holy Prophet enumerated less merits than before) and who *kills* it with the third blow would earn so much (here the *Holy* Prophet enumerated even lesser than before. (*Sahih Muslim*)

Familiarly killing of other dangerous and harmful *animals cares* merit.

(69) CONTROLLING THE TONGUE

Tongue is a great gift of Allah. By it one can, if one so desires, accumulate incalculable merit for the Hereafter or one can destroy his life in the other world. This is why controlling the tongue has been much enjoined and reticence has been lauded in *ahadith*. Abdullah bin Masood relates that once he asked the Holy Prophet, "Which is the best deed"" The Holy Prophet said Praying on time". Then he asked "Which act is second to it?" The Holy Prophet said:

أَنْ يَسْلَمَ النَّاسُ مِنْ لِسَانِكَ

"That people be safe from your tongue". (Targhib, p..302, vol.4. ref. Tabrani)

In other words prevent your tongue from causing pain to others, from backbiting and roam cheating.

Aqabah ibn Amir asked the Holy Prophet "What is the way to salvation?"

He said

أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ لِسَانَكَ، وَلْيَسَعْكَ بَيْتُكَ وَابْكِ عَلَى خَطِيئَتِكَ

"Control your tongue and make your house sufficient for yourself and weep ever your sins" (Abu Daud and Tirmidhi).

Making the house sufficient means that one should not unnecessarily leave his house to go out and get involved in mischief, and weeping on sins means ex pressing contrition on one's sins and seeking Divine forgiveness of them.

In another *hadith* it is related that our blessed Prophet said to Abu Dhar Ghifari, "Should I not tell you two things which sit lightly on man but are weighty in the scales (on the Day of Judgement)?. Then he said:

عَلَيْكَ بِحُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ، وَطُولِ الصَّمْتِ

"Always be courteous and make a habit of *reticence" (Targhib, p. 312, vol. 4 ref. Tabrani, Abu Laila* etc).

Once our Prophet - upon whom be peace - said the same to Abu Darda' *(ibid.* Ref. Abu al Shaikh).

(70) AVOIDING USELESS TALK AND ACTIVITIES

Everything which is of no use in this world or in the next is useless and its avoidance has been enjoined in Qur'an as well as *hadith:*

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ

> *nor one who avoid shun useless conversation*

Abu Hurairah has related that our Holy Prophet has said: مِنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لَا يَعْنِيْهِ

> *A part of being a good Muslim is avoiding useless things. (Tirmidhi).*

Hence it is the duty *of* every Muslim to avoid useless works and activities.

(71)-(77) SIX GOOD DEEDS

Hadith tells us that our Holy Prophet - upon whom be eternal blessings has pointed out six deeds for which he himself has guaranteed paradise. Ibadah ibn Sanit relates the following Prophetic saying:-

اِضْمَنُوْا لِيْ سِتًّا مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَضْمَنْ لَكُمُ الْجَنَّةَ، أَدُّوْا
إِذَا ائْتُمِنْتُمْ وَأَوْفُوْا إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ، وَاصْدُقُوْا إِذَا
حَدَّثْتُمْ وَاحْفَظُوْا فُرُوْجَكُمْ وَغُضُّوْا أَبْصَارَكُمْ، وَكُفُّوْا أَيْدِيَكُمْ-

> *"You give me guarantee of six deeds and I shall guarantee you Paradise. (firstly) redeem the trust placed in you;*

(secondly) carry out your contracts; (thirdly) speak the truth (always); (fourthly) save your (sexual) organs from (unlawful) acts; (fifthly) keep your eyes down; and (sixthly) keep your hands (from *harming others and sinning). (Shah-al-Imam li al Baihaqi, p.320, 321, vol. 4, hadith 5256)*

(78) BEGINNING FROM THE RIGHT

Beginning from right is pleasing to Allah and His blessed Messenger on which one may expect merit and reward. Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) has said that our Prophet - be he always blessed - liked to begin from right in everything in wadhu, in combing and in putting on :hoes.

Abu Hurairah has related the following Prophetic saying:

إذا لبستم وإذا توضأتم فابدءوا بأيامنكم

When you put on your dress, begin from the right (Abu Daud and Tirmidhi)

and he has also related another Prophetic saying:

إذا انتعل أحدكم فليبدأ باليمين،
وإذا نزع فليبدأ بالشمال

When anyone of you puts *on his shots, begin from the right and when he takes off his shoes he should begin from the*

left. (Bukhari and Muslim) Similarly eating with the right hand has been commanded by our blessed Holy Prophet. Ibn Omar has related the following Prophetic saying: "When you eat, eat with your right hand and when you drink, drink with your right hand".

(Sahih Muslim)

When something is distributed, it should be from the right, as this is a Prophetic custom.

One should put his left foot first when entering the lavatory and his right foot when coming out. Following this *sunnah* shall be source of great merit.

These are minor and simple matters which should be kept in mind and followed.

(79) CLEANING AND EATING A DROPPED MORSEL

Our Prophet - may he be blessed - has also instructed us that if me accidentally drop a morsel on the ground, it should be picked up, even washed if needed, and eaten. Jabir has related the following Prophetic saying: *When anyone of you drops a morsel, he should clean it of any unwanted accretion and eat if and should riot leave it for Satan. Then upon finishing, he should like his fingers as he knows not which part of the is beneficial for him".*

(Sahih Muslim).

According to this hadith, disrespect for food and drink is a Satanic act, and eating a dropped mail is a respectful act, which shall surely earn merit and reward and one must not feel ashamed of it. However, if to clean it is impossible, then it is quite another matter.

(80) PRAISING ALLAH UPON SNEEZING AND ITS RESPONSE

Abu Hurairah has related a Prophetic saying: "Allah likes sneezing and dislike yawning. When anyone of you sneezes he should say اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰه and the hearer thereof should respond يَرْحَمُكَ اللّٰه as it is a right of the one who sneezes. (Sahih Bukhari).

There was a time when all observed these norms of Islamic behavior, but now none even knows them, hence those norms hence to revived.

(81) FEAR OF ALLAH

Allah - by virtue of His Greatness - should be feared, as has been enjoined time and again in Qur'an as well as ahadith. Abbas the uncle of our blessed Holy Prophet has related that once he and others were sitting under the tree with the Holy Prophet when dry leaves began to fall from the tree till only green leaves remained. The Holy Prophet said. "This (tree) is like a believer who trembles with fear of Allah and so sheds his sins leaving behind only good deeds". (Al

Targhib, p. 227. vol. S. ref. Baihaqi)

To create fear of Allah, we should think of His Power and Greatness, of the straits of earlier *ummahs* and of the chastisement mentioned in Qur'an and *hadith* for the disobedient ones. This shall create Allah's fear in the heart and prevent one from wrongdoing, sinning and unlawful acts, and one shall attain piety which is the basis of all good and of deliverance and salvation in this world and in the next. May Allah grant unto us the opportunity for it all Amen.

(82) OPTIMISM AND HOPE FROM ALLAH

Beside fear of allah, expecting good from Him is an act of subline merit. Abu Hurairah has quoted a Prophetic saying:

إِنَّ حُسْنَ الظَّنِّ مِنْ حُسْنِ عِبَادَةِ اللّٰهِ

"Hoping for good is also an act of worship of Allah". (Tirmidhi and Hakim)

In a hadith-e-qudsi our blessed Prophet has quoted the Divine *words:*

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي، وَأَنَا مَعَهُ حَيْثُ يَذْكُرُنِي

I am ***what*** *my bondsman thinks of me. And where he remembers Me, there I am with him (Bukhari and Muslim).*

Many merits have been given is Qnr'an and

Hadith for having high hopes from Allah- This implies that one must try to live according to the Divine Commands and when he incuritably commits errors, he should expect Divine Mercy for it. But if one is entirely unmindful of Divine commands, does not care to reform himself, and is driven by worldly and ear desire and yet expects Divine Pardon and Mercy, he has been castigated in *hadith*.

The right way is to try to reform oneself and to balance Allah's fear and good hopes from, Him.

Anas has related that "Once our Prophet - may he be eternally blessed - went to a young man who was on his death bed and asked him 'How do you feel?' The young man said. 'I have much bope from Allah but I also fear for my sins'. The Holy Prophet said, 'The believer who has these two ideas simultaneously at such time, Allah fulfills his hopes and grants him security from fear". *(Tirmidhi)*

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